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A Study of the Trinity in the Cappadocian Fathers

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A STUDY OF THE TRINITY IN THE CAPPADOCIAN FATHERS

BY

George W. Buck

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the requirements for the degree
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PREFACE

The object in writing this thesis has been to pursue the theological development of the doctrine of the trinity in the Church of the early centuries through the writings of the Church fathers. It is a continuation of a former study, A New Testament Study of Trinity, a thesis submitted for the Bachelor of Divinity degree, which was received in July, 1952. This entire study has been an attempt to soak the self in the patristic writings and to arrive at a first-hand conception of the classical doctrine of the trinity, which we believe, is a creation of the fourth century.

The former study was for the purpose to determine whether or not the trinity of generally accepted orthodox Christian dogma was to be found taught explicitly, or not at all upon the pages of the New Testament, or, in other words, to separate fact from mere interpretation.

We did not find any of the developed doctrines, of schism or orthodoxy, explicit nor implicit within the canonical writings of the New Testament. The trinity of experience is there explicitly, which is the experience expressed in all historical Christian witness.

It has been stimulating, to say the least, to find permeating the thought of contemporary theologians this same zest in pursuit of an understanding of trinity and very encouraging to discover trends of thought with little variance from ours. Cyril C. Richardson, who has written one of the most recent books on trinity, has concluded, "It is not a doctrine

specifically to be found in the New Testament."[1] He, also, asserts that there are elements in our New Testament which point toward it and others which point away from it. "No one has been able to trace one in its pages nor make one from its incoherence of interchangeability of terminology and functions."[2]

Mr. Richardson takes comfort in his position from another contemporary scholar.

> While my book was in the press, the illuminating article, "Some Reflections on the Origins of the Doctrine of the Trinity," by Maurice Wiles, appeared in the Journal of Theological Studies, April, 1957, pages 92-106. I am encouraged to find another theologian independently raising some of the issues I have tried to treat, and arriving at conclusions not dissimilar to my own.[3]

That it was God who was taking action in Jesus Christ of Nazareth has not and is not questioned. That it is God acting by the Holy Spirit has not been doubted. The pursuit of the former thesis and this one is to question the classical formulations of the trinitarian doctrine in the light of biblical research and religious speculation and determine for reasons of personal religious faith whether the doctrine is, and if it is necessary to Christian faith and the adequate way of speaking of the reality and functions of God, the Father, Jesus Christ, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

How to interpret theologically the Christian trinitarian experience of God with clarity minus inconsistencies and contradictions in the use of terms has been the problem of the Church through the centuries. Our own

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[1]Cyril C., Richardson, The Doctrine of the Trinity (New York: Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1958), 17.

[2]Ibid., 52. [3]Ibid., 9.

consciousness of a need for such a know-how has driven us into the previous New Testament study and on to the present one, endlessly trying to glean fact from interpretation within the biblical record and separating biblical fact from interpretations of the centuries. For us, affirmation of trinity and some attempt to intellectually comprehend it, as well as experience it, plus the acquisition of a vocabulary and a jargon to talk about and explain faith are an inevitable and inescapable corollary of Christian certitude. Reaching out toward this goal, we have entered into a study of the development of the trinitarian doctrine from the primitive church through the succeeding centuries, singling out the Cappadocian Fathers as the focal point for this paper.

The Cappadocian Fathers, their works, and environment lie at the heart, historically, in doctrine, events, and calendrical years of the definitive formulation of trinitarian dogma. We feel that an intensive study of these three fathers of the Church has taken us a long way toward satisfying personal inquisitiveness and supplying knowledge to explain theologically the trinity of experience and adding Christian certitude to personal faith.

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INTRODUCTION

Trinity is characteristic of the Christian religion but is by no means peculiar to it.

> In Indian religion, we meet with the Trinitarian group of Brahma, Siva and Visner; and in Egyptian religion with the trinitarian group of Osiris, Isis, and Horus, constituting the divine family like the Father, Mother, and Son in mediaeval pictures. Nor is it only in historical religions that we find God viewed as Trinity. One recalls in particular the Neo-Platonic view of the supreme or Ultimate Reality, which was suggested by Plato in the Timaeus; in the philosophy of Plotinus the primary or original realities . . . are triadically represented as the Good or . . . the One, the Intelligence or the One-Many, and the World-Soul or the One and Many.[1]

The term, trinity, which is derived from the Latin trinitas appears to have been used first by Tertullian (150-200 A. D.), an early Church Father of western theology.

> Perversion of the truth is . . . one cannot believe in One Only God . . . by saying that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are the very selfsame Person. As if in this way also one were not All, in that All are of One, by unity (that is) of substance; the mystery . . . distributes the Unity into a Trinity.[2]

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[1]William Fulton, "Trinity," Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, ed. by James Hastings (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons), XII, 458.

[2]Tertullian, "Against Praxeas," The Ante-Nicene Fathers, ed. by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (American Reprint of Edinberg Edition, revised and chronologically arranged by A. Cleveland Coxe,) (Buffalo: The Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1885), III, 598.

Here we see an approach to trinity characteristic of western theology, one essence shared by three, a "one-in-three" approach.

The corresponding Greek term, triad, was applied first by an older contemporary of Tertullian, Theophilus of Antioch. His use of the term was not God, the Father, Son, and Spirit, but "The Trinity, of God, and of His Word (Logos), and His Wisdom."[1] Here we find the roots of Eastern Trinitarian theology, a "three-in-one" and not, "one-in-three."

There can be no doubt that these two Apologists' and their contemporaries' thought was highly confused; they were far from having worked the threefold pattern of the Church's faith into a coherent scheme. Their words about the Holy Spirit were very meager. They said more about the Son, of whom they were primarily concerned, to preserve his deity and unity with God, the Father, and to comprehend the relationship. Theophilus provides for us a fairly mature example of their teaching, which, even though merely a forerunner of orthodoxy, shows that there was firmly fixed the idea of a holy triad.

> Theophilus . . . stating that the three days which preceded the creation of sun and moon 'were types of the Triad, that is, of God, and His Word, and of His Wisdom.'[2]

Preceding the era of the eastern and western Fathers of the Church, we have the age of the Apostolic Fathers. The drawing upon Old Testament

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[1]Theophilus, "Theophilus of Autolycus," Ante-Nicene Christian Library, trans. by Marcus Dods, ed. by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Edinburg: T. and T. Clark, 1868), III, 82.

[2]J. N. D. Kelly, Early Christian Doctrines (New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1958), 102.

imagery and theophanies for support of the idea of trinity has been common from their time. We conclude here, however:

> It is exegesis of a mischievous, if pious sort that would discover the doctrine in the plural form 'Elohim,' of the Diety's name, in the recorded appearances of three angels to Abraham, or even in the ter sanctus of the prophesies of Isaiah.[1]

By the end of the Apostolic Fathers' era there was no belief in a pre-existent beings, God and the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit was identified with the pre-existent Christ, or the Logos, or the Father's 'thought.'[2]

Then beginning with the Apologists, of whom we have cited Theophilus and Tertullian as examples, a distinction is made between the pre-existent Logos and the pre-existent Holy Spirit. The Logos now being identified with the pre-existent Christ.

> The Holy Spirit becomes a third preexistent incorporeal being with the result that the Trinity, now a Trinity of God, Logos, and the Holy Spirit, no longer begins with the birth of Jesus; it has an existence prior to His birth and even prior to the Creation of the world.[3]

"Christianity began as a trinitarian religion with a unitarian theology."[4] The historical record reveals that the trinity of experience

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[1]Fulton, loc. cit.

[2]Cf. Harry A. Wolfson, The Philosophy of the Church Fathers (Cambridge: Howard University Press, 1956), 191.
Kelly, op. cit., 92, 95.

[3]Wolfson, op. cit., 49.

[4]Leonard Hodgson, The Doctrine of the Trinity (third ed. London: Nisbet and Co., Ltd., 1946), 103.

long antedates the trinity of dogma. In spite of the confused and incoherent thought of the Apostolic Fathers and the Apologists, lineaments of trinitarian doctrine are clearly discernable. And the trinity of experience now gives way to trinity of speculation.[1]

> The differentiation is no longer, as it was for Paul and John of the Early Church, a difference in the operation of the Divine Being in His Creation and upon human life . . . but a description of distinctions within the Godhead for which their is no definable basis, and perhaps can be no basis, within our assured knowledge of God. . . . And the resulting conception verges precariously toward tritheism.[2]

The baptismal formula[3] and the widely used benediction[4] undergo a transition in history from primarily teaching what each Christian knew to be his experience of God to what theologians assume to be true of the being of God, which has culminated into the trinity of dogma, which has held a place of priority through the centuries to the present day. The best formulation of the dogma for our introduction to trinity is the so-called Athanasian Creed:[5]

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[1]Fulton, op. cit., 459.

[2]Henry P. Van Dusen, Spirit, Son and Father (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958), 156.

[3]Matthew 28:19.

[4]II Corinthians 13:14.

[5]"Socalled" because it is believed to have originated in the Latin Church; Athanasius is an Eastern theologian; since the middle of the 17th Century Athanasian authorship has been fully abandoned. For a full exposition see, Philip Schaff, History of the Christian Church, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1886, III, 35-37.

The Catholic Faith is this: that we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity, neither confounding the Persons nor dividing the Substance.

For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost; but the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost is all one - the glory equal, the majesty co-equal.

Such as the Father is, such is the Son and such is the Holy Ghost: the Father uncreate, the Son uncreate, and the Holy Ghost uncreate; the Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible; the Holy Ghost incomprehensible; the Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Ghost eternal;

And yet there are not three eternals, but one eternal; as also there are not three incomprehensibles nor three uncreated, but one uncreated and one incomprehensible.

So likewise the Father is almighty, the Son almighty, and the Holy Ghost almighty; and yet there are not three almighties, but one almighty. So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God; and yet there are not three Gods but one God; so likewise the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, and the Holy Ghost Lord; and yet not three Lord's but one Lord.[1]

For like as we are compelled by Christian verity to acknowledge every person by himself to be God and Lord, so we are forbidden by the Catholic religion to say there be three Gods or three Lords.

The Father is made of none, neither created nor begotten;

The Son is of the Father alone, neither made nor created but begotten;

The Holy Ghost is of the Father and of the Son, neither made nor created nor begotten, but proceeding;

So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts.

And in this Trinity none is afore or after other, none is greater or less than another; but the whole three Persons are co-eternal together and co-equal.[2]

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[1]Cf. John 5:19-30; I Cor. 15:24-28.

[2]Ibid.

So that in all things as afore said: Unity in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity, is to be worshipped.

He therefore that will be saved must thus think of the Trinity."[1]

A careful scrutiny of this creed reveals the assertion of schisms and heresies as well as the denials and affirmations of the trinity of dogma. It shows an affinity to scripture, but also a speculative play upon the ultimate significance of words such as; "begotten." It reveals an ignoring of gospel and epistolary record[2] and a going beyond the scriptural account and biblical implication to new concepts. It shows the battle of centuries in relationship to trinity and a commonly accepted orthodox statement of dogma.

Ever since St. Paul wrote, "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself,"[3] and the writer of Hebrews asserted about the Son, "He reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of his nature,"[4] and the Disciple said, "And the Word was God,"[5] (and Paul's statement being the central Christian conviction) Christian theology has been trying to understand and explain it; therefore, it has become the central problem of Christian doctrine; viz. how to maintain the unity of God, "the Lord

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[1]The Athanasian Creed quoted from Van Dusen, op. cit., 159ff.

[2]Cf. John 5:19-30; I Cor. 15:24-28.

[3]II Cor. 5:19; cf. Col. 1:19.

[4]Heb. 1:3.

[5]John 1:1.

our God is one Lord,"[1] and how to affirm the true humanity of Jesus and not obscure, "God was in Christ," nor default redemption as truly an act of God.

Salvation was endangered to dispute the deity of the Son and to assert the inferiority of the Holy Spirit, it was so felt by the Fathers of the Church. To tolerate such philosophical-theological belief was to endanger the uniqueness of the Church as the fellowship in which God himself was at work and to permit the Church to be swallowed up in the culture of the day and call to question its distinctive message and mission.

The doctrine of the trinity was fashioned in order to explain the incarnate subject, Jesus, and how the non-incarnate Father and Holy Spirit could be embraced in one undivided Godhead. On one hand it was necessary to avoid a separation of the several subjects within the Godhead for that would be tritheism. On the other hand it was necessary to assert distinctions, intrinsic to deity, of which there should be an eternal difference, in some respect, between God as Father and source of all being, God as soul of Jesus, God as the Holy Spirit.

It is in "threeness" that the main difficulty lies. How can God be one yet three? How can the three be united into ultimate oneness? How can God be Creator?[2] How can Jesus be Creator[3] and also the Holy Spirit?[4]

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[1]Deut. 6:4. [2]Gen. 1:1. [3]John 1:3.

[4]Gen. 1:3, Matt. 1:20; Lk. 1:35; Gal. 5:22.

How were Jesus and the Holy Spirit different from God and from each other and yet have no tritheism and have these differences not merely modes, aspects of energizing, attributes, roles?

> Indeed it may be said that from Tertullian to Aquinas the expounders of the doctrine of the trinity were seeking to find a notion of a kind of entity denoted by persona, substantia, hypostases, "begotten," "procession;" in all these we see attempts to express in a notion of an entity.[1]

However, the same thinker, on different occasions, uses expressions and analogies suggestive of tritheism and then modes of speech implicative of Monarchianism; it is not surprising to find at the end of a treatise on trinity the writer confessing that he has been discoursing about a mystery that is above reason, on which analogies drawn from human life and experience, concepts of logic and philosophy, throw little light but do not explain.

> One thing has been made clear by the age-long attempt is that the clearest and most assured statements of doctors of theology leave no doubt but that tritheism is repugnant to the Church and that orthodoxy when it is not vague or vacillating is as monarchias as Sabellianism. If the Person of the Trinity be not God's but monotheism is left and academic orthodoxy is at least logical in being modalistic.[2]

Mr. Tennant has made discerning statements, because a certain common ground of schism and orthodoxy is a fervent dislike to the division of the Supreme Being owing to their strong zeal for the Divine Unity, which has been regarded by both as necessary for redemption of man as an act of God.

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[1]F. R. Tennant, The World, the Soul and God, Philosophical Theology (Cambridge: The University Press, 1930), II, 268.

[2]Ibid.

Traditionally, Christian theology in setting forth its conception of trinity has taken its start from "God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth,"[1] and has passed on to Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, and almost casually, at long last come to the Holy Spirit. Some have felt that it was the place of the Son in the trinity which is the beginning point and, if explained, gives clarity to trinity. So, some have considered Christ, and then God, in the light of Christ, and finally the Spirit. The former taking the great commission[2] for biblical foundation; the latter building upon and from the Pauline benediction.[3]

Seldom, if ever, an exposition of trinity has been made beginning with the Spirit until recent times. Dr. Van Dusen has attempted[4] an exposition of trinity in this order: the Holy Spirit, and then on to consider "Christ-in-the-light-of-the-Holy Spirit,"[5] and finally "God-in-the-light-of-the-Holy Spirit."[6] Another intriguing treatise with a similar, but more daring approach, is by Arnold Come.[7] The fruitfulness of the experiments remain to be seen. It wasn't until the fourth century the Spirit's place became a focus of attention in trinity.

Holy Scripture has been the basic authority for all Christian doctrine, schismatic or orthodox. This is substantiated throughout the

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[1]Taken from the Apostles' Creed, "We believe in God . . ."

[2]Matt. 28:9. [3]II Cor. 13:14.

[4]Henry P. Van Dusen, Spirit, Son and Father (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958).

[5]Ibid., 4. [6]Ibid.

[7]Arnold B. Come, Human Spirit and Holy Spirit (Philadelphia: The Westminister Press, 1959).

writings of the early and later Church Fathers and is dwelt upon by noted scholars[1] of the history of dogma. There is no need to dwell upon this as a doctrinal norm for trinitarian theology. However, another source of authority for the Christian doctrines of the early church is written and unwritten tradition. In fact, it seems that doctors of theology were forced to accept tradition as equally authoritative as Scripture or relinquish their tenacious grasp on some trinitarian theology. Many fine scholars give adequate reference and treatment of the way Church Fathers cited the authoritativeness of tradition but not one equals or excells, in our opinion, J. N. D. Kelly.[2] Our primary subjects, the Cappadocians, made their direct appeal to the authority of tradition for their trinitarian doctrines.[3]

The literature on trinitarian doctrine is vast and scarcely a lifetime would master it. "It has been observed that while one may be in danger of losing his soul by denying it, he is in equal danger of losing his wits in trying to understand it."[4]

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[1]Kelly, op. cit., 41.
J. Bethune-Baker, An Introduction to the Early History of Christian Doctrine (2nd. ed. London: Methuen & Co., Litd., 1920), 55ff.

[2]Kelly, op. cit., 29-51.

[3]Basil the Great, "De Spiritu Sancto," Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers (ed. by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, 2nd. Series. New York: The Christian Literature Co., 1895), VIII, 17, 18, 43, 44.
Gregory of Nazianzus, "Epistle 101," Library of Christian Classics, Christology of the Later Father (ed. by Edward R. Hardy, Philadelphia: Westiminister Press, 1954), III, 215.
Gregory of Nyssa, "Against Eunomius," Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers (ed. by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, 2nd. Series. New York: The Christian Literature Co., 1895), V, 153ff.

[4]Richardson, op. cit., 15.

The seeming necessity and importance of the definitive formulation of trinitarian dogma by the three Cappadocians cannot be grasped without a running survey of trinitarian speculation preceding their documents. One, also, must envisage their setting in the midst of the theological battle of the fourth century. A full discussion of merely their teaching on trinity would be a large theological treatise. But to appreciate their place in trinitarian classicism a background and brief treatments of the main lines of classical Christian theology is of greater value than a minute presentation and discussion of their points of doctrine; the latter could be done without grasping the significance of the Cappadocians in the historical development of trinity; the former, our procedure now, we trust, will accomplish both, an adequate knowledge of their trinitarian dogma and its historical significance in the history of Christian thought.

CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND

Two factors to be reckoned with in the progression of trinitarianism from the apostolic times onward are Gnosticism and Docetism. Particularly in the second and third centuries they are most potent elements operating in the Christian Church's environment adversely to orthodoxy, "diametrically opposite Christological tendency."[1] Ireneaus, Tertullian and Hippolytus treat them explicitly as Christian heresy.

"The early Fathers almost unanimously trace[2] the origin of Gnosticism to Simon Magus."[3] The Nicolaitans of the Apocalypse were considered Gnostics.[4] Valentinus, who taught at Alexandria and later at Rome in the middle of the second century, and Basilides, perhaps Syrian born, who also lectured at Alexandria (120-140 A. D.), are the finest representatives of Christian Gnosticism, and the most influential.[5]

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[1]Kelly, op. cit., 140.

[2]J. F. Bethune-Baker, Early History of Christian Doctrine (2nd. ed., London: Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1920), 79.

[3]Acts 8:9, 10.

[4]Bethune-Baker, op. cit., 79; Cf. Rev. 2:6.

[5]For a complete presentation of their schools of thought see: Ibid., 86-91.

There was a great variety of gnostic systems but "a common pattern ran through them all."[1] Their Christologies take us into a bizarre world of cosmic speculation. From a spiritual world of aeons the divine Christ is to have descended and united himself for a time to the historical personage, Jesus. This union was to have taken place at the time of Jesus' baptism.[2] According to Irenaeus[3] these Gnostics taught that Jesus was compounded of two distinct substances, heavenly Christ and a lower Christ. The heavenly Christ was invisible, impassible, implying that the lower Christ, with whom the heavenly joined himself, was not real flesh and blood. The man Jesus was not really Redeemer but merely the instrument[4] selected by God for the purpose of revealing himself to men. It was only in appearance that he was subjected to death on the cross. In this respect, "seeming," gnosticism was docetic and herein we find the unique element of the Christian Docetists.

"To seem," the distinctive feature which gave the name, Docetism, was that Christ's manhood and suffering were phantasmal, unreal. Traces of protestation against teaching of this nature are visible in the New Testament.[5] To the docetic thinker the divinity of Christ was no problem; it was the humanity with its inherent impurity that they could not accept.

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[1]Kelly, op. cit., 141.

[2]Irenaeus, "Against Heresies," The Ante-Nicene Fathers, ed. by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, (Buffalo: The Christian Literature Publishing Company, 1885), I, 325.

[3]Ibid., para. 3. 16. 5. 325ff.

[4]What the instrument was exactly cannot be stated, but it emerges from the Gnostics pluralism, pleroma.

[5]I John 4:2, 3: II John 7.

> Jesus passed through Mary as water through a tube.[1] For just as water passes through a pipe without receiving any addition from the pipe, so too the Word passed through Mary but was not derived from Mary.[2]

Flesh, Mary, was only a channel by which Christ came into the world. He was through or by means of, but not "of" Mary, which is to say that he derived no part of his being. Docetism was a direct denial of incarnation. "It was an attitude which infected a number of heresies, particularly Marcionism and Gnosticism."[3]

Marcion is classed hardly with Christian Gnostics; "he had no emanation or aeon theory;"[4] "it contained no trace of Gnostic pluralism."[5] He did consider the Lord's body "as without flesh,"[6] To him the redeemer was the Son of God, almost as the God of the New Testament in person,[7] but he was clothed with the outward appearance, "seeming," of man. So, to this extent he was docetic, but, "almost in the fashion of the modalists."[8]

It was in conflict with Gnosticism, Docetism, and Monarchianism that the doctrine of the trinity was developed. Two tendencies can be distinguished among the Monarchians: modalism, which held Christ to be a manifestation of God the Father, sometimes referred to as Patripassianism, or

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[1]Irenaeus, op. cit., 1. 2. [2]Bethune-Baker, op. cit., 81.

[3]Kelly, op. cit., 141. [4]Bethune-Baker, loc. cit.

[5]Kelly, op. cit., 142.

[6]Tertullian, "On the Flesh of Christ," The Ante-Nicene Fathers, (ed. by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, Buffalo: The Christian Literature Publishing Company, 1885), III, 525.

[7]Bethune-Baker, loc. cit. [8]Kelly, loc. cit.

monarchianism proper. Dynamic monarchianism, more accurately called adoptionism, a rationalism which held that Christ was a mere man upon whom God's Spirit had descended adopting him a redeemer. To the modalistic monarchians belong Praxeas, Noetus, Callistus, Beryllus and Sabellius. Theodotus, Artemon and Paul of Samosata belong to adoptionism.

In origin, monarchianism was an orthodox attempt to retain the unity of the Godhead, holding fast to the monarchy, and keeping redemption as an act of God, not merely 'psychic' or 'seeming' to be.

> Both tendencies passing into each other, were Catholic, maintaining the fundamental principals of the rule of faith (neither "ebionitic,"[1] nor gnostic).[2]

The originator of adoptionism is said to have been a very learned Byzantine leather-merchant, Theodotus, who "brought it to Rome about 190."[3]

> While in full agreement with orthodox views about the creation of the world, the divine omnipotence and even the virgin birth, Theodotus held that until His Baptism Jesus lived as an ordinary man, with the difference that He was supremely virtuous. The Spirit, or Christ, then descended upon Him, and from that moment He worked miracles, without,

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[1]Ebionism was a Judaizing Christianity. Ebionites rejected the virgin birth, the Lord, Jesus, a man normally born from Joseph and Mary, predestined to be Messiah, and as such would return to reign on earth. They were a potent force in the apostolic age, often called Nazareans, and though denying Jesus' divinity, believed him to be Son of God as revealed by Justin, Irenaeus, Tertullian.

[2]Adolph Harnack, Outlines of the History of Dogma, (trans. by Edwin Knox Mitchell, Boston: Beacon Press, Beacon Hill, 1957), 168.

[3]Kelly, op. cit., 116.

> however, becoming divine - others of the same school admitted His deification after His resurrection.[1]

Theodotus was excommunicated by the Pope Victor (186-98). But his ideas were taken up by another Theodotus[2] and Artemon, who lived in Rome after the middle of the third century and was a contemporary of Paul of Samosata, who is regarded as the most colorful exponent of dynamic monarchianism. He was formally condemned by the Synod of Antioch in 268. The most brilliant synopsis of Paul of Samosata's[3] trinitarianism comes from J. N. D. Kelly.

> He applied the title "Word" to God's commandment and ordinance, i.e. God ordered what He willed through man, and so did it . . . He (Apostle Paul) did not say Father, Son and Holy Spirit are one and the same, but gave the name of God to the Father who created all things, that of the Son to the mere man, and that of Spirit to the grace which in dwelt the apostles.[4]

> Jesus Christ, he declared, was one, the Word another, the former being from below and the latter from above. Mary did not, indeed could not, bear the Word. The word was a kind of "indwelling," a "quality," not in his view a person, so, 'Mary did not bear the Word, for Mary did not exist before the ages. Mary is not older than the word; what she bore was a man equal to us, but superior in all things as a result of holy spirit.[5]

What this amounts to is that Adoptionists were willing to use the trinitarian formula, but only as a cover-up for a unitarian theology, denying any subsistance to the Word and teaching that the Son and Spirit

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[1] Ibid.; Deut. 18:15 and Luke 1:35 are some of the texts to which adoptionists used for their position.

[2] "Who is said to be an Asclepiodotus." Ibid.

[3] A Syrian. [4] Ibid., 140. [5] Ibid.

were merely the Church's names for the inspired man Jesus Christ and grace which God pured upon the apostles. So Jesus had a status very much like, if not identical to, the old Testament prophets.[1]

Not adoptionism but modalism was the dangerous opponent of the Logos Christology and the subtle blockage to progressiveness in orthodox trinitarian formulations. The dynamic form of monarchianism was so apparently destructive to the divinity of Jesus that it could hardly have been a real threat to faith in the incarnation. "These adoptionists were an isolated and unrepresentative movement in Gentile Christianity."[2] declares authoritative J. N. D. Kelly; however, opposition to them covers not a small space in early Christian literature. Modalists were more apt to attract sincere, pious, earnest Christians for they were passionate for the oneness of God and the deity of Christ. But any assertion that the Word, or Son was a distinct person from the Father, or other than the Father was declared by Modalists to be a blasphemy, viz., two Gods, thus Partipassians as they were first called[3] by Tertullian in the West. In the East modalistic theology was known as Sabellianism taking its name from Sabellius,[4] "for subsequently everything is called "Sabellianism,"

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[1]This evaluation of Paul of Samosata seems to be identical to: Edward Rochie Hardy, "General Introduction: Faith in Christ, Theology and Creeds," Christology of the Later Fathers. Library of Christian Classics (Philadelphia: The Westminister Press, 1954), III, 16.

[2]Kelly, op. cit., 117. [3]Harnack, op. cit., 176.

[4]By birth a Libyan of Pentapolis in Africa; active at Rome in the early part of the 3rd. century; for a time had the confidence of Pope Callistus but later excommunicated by him.

which pertains to the eternal hypostasis of the Son,"[1] or "Father and Son are merely two appearances of the same subject - two parts (prosopa, personae, as in dramatis personae) assumed by the same being."[2]

Noetus of Smyrna was the first theologian to state[3] this monarchian position declaring[4] that it was the Father who suffered and underwent Christ's human experiences; if Christ was God then he must be identical with the Father for he was God; consequently, if Christ suffered, the Father suffered since there was one God and there could be no division in the Godhead.

Praxeas[5] taught[6] that it was the Father who entered the Virgin's womb, so becoming, as it were, his own Son, who suffered and died and rose again.

> Yet Praxeas and his associates, it would seem were in the end obliged to recognize a duality in the Lord in the sense that the man Jesus was, strictly speaking, the Son, while the Christ, i.e. the divine element (spiritum, id est deum) was properly the Father.[7]

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[1]Harnack, op. cit., 183. [2]Hardy, op. cit., 15.

[3]Kelly, op. cit., 120.

[4]Hippolytus, "Against the Heresy of One Noetus," The Ante-Nicene Fathers (ed. by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, Buffalo: The Christian Literature Co., 1886), 223-231.

[5]"A shadowy figure; 'Praxeas' could be a nickname, meaning 'busybody,' some have identified him with Noetus." See Kelly, op. cit., 121.

[6]Tertullian, "Against Praxeas," op. cit., 1. 5. 7. 10.

[7]Kelly, op. cit., 121.

"It is curious to observe how close at this point modalism came to Theodotus' adoptionism."[1] "As soon as the distinguishing of caro (filius) and spiritus (pater) was taken strictly modalism passes over into Adoptionism."[2]

The philosophical, more systematic presentation of modalistic theology appears to be the work of Sabellius. He is credited with the establishing of clearer distinctions between the modes, or aspects of God's appearances and recognized more definitely the Holy Spirit as a third prosōpon, mode, of deity. He seems to have "adopted the language of the Church so far as to speak of three 'persons' using the term, πρόσωπα, but in so different a sense."[3] God had put forth his activity in merely three successive energies, or stages.

> First in the prosōpon (= form of manifestation, figure; not = hypostosis) of the Father as Creator and Lawgiver; secondly, in the prosōpon of the Son as Redeemer, beginning with the incarnation and ending with the ascension; finally, and up till the present hour, in the prosōpon of the Spirit as giver and sustainer of life.[4]

God is, according to teaching accredited to Sabellius, ("we cannot be sure that all the details of the position . . . can be attributed to Sabellius himself . . . evidence dates from a century or more after his

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[1]Ibid.

[2]Harnack, op. cit., 180, 181. Cf. Tertullian, op. cit., 27, 29.

[3]Bethune-Baker, op. cit., 105.

[4]T. Rees, The Holy Spirit in Thought and Experience (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915), 124.

lifetime."[1]) essentially one, and the trinity he recognizes is not of essence but of revelation, "not in the essential relations of the deity within itself, but in relation to the world outside and to mankind."[2] The one God is appearing now as Father, now as Son, and now as Holy Spirit. "According to Epiphanus and Athanasius God was not at the same time the Father and the Son, but rather in three successive stages.[3] In any case, it is clear that there is no permanence about such prosōpons, personalities, appearances, therefore, no real incarnation. God only manifested himself in Christ, and when the part was played "the curtain fell upon that act in the great drama there ceased to be a Christ or a Son of God."[4]

We have referred to the West and to the East designating the Eastern Church and its thought and the Western Church and its characteristics in theological expression; however, there is no coherent system of theology which can be clearly designated as either. By "East" or "West," "Greek," or "Latin," we simply mean primarily the pertinent elements of thought written down by a few selected representatives of the Church in the East or the Church in the West. There are personalities who primarily fall in the Eastern Church category, and at the same time have an affinity to Western thought, and visa versa.

In the West, at this time, we have the first group of Latin theologians, Hippolytus, Tertullian, Novation and Cyprian. They had already

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[1]Kelly, op. cit., 122. [2]Bethune-Baker, loc. cit.

[3]Rees, loc. cit.

[4]Bethune-Baker, op. cit., 106.
Cf. Arthur Cushman McGiffert, A History of Christian Thought (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1931), I, 238-9.

laid down the Western conception of trinity in the sense of a 'monarchy' or 'economy,' a society, but one-in-three not three-in-one. Tertullian is cited mostly as the representative of this. He was anti-modalistic, yet, "the economic Trinity, like the Modalist, was a Trinity of revelation . . . it was Modalism modified . . . it carried the stages of divine administration into the inner being of God as essential and personal, (not passing) distinctions."[1] The Modalist's indistinctiveness between Father, Son and Spirit cause him to exert himself to show that the threeness revealed in the economy was in no way incompatible with holding to God's essential unity.

Tertullian "was the first to define the Godhead by the formula, una substantia, tres personae,"[2] which has been since considered orthodox and essential to it.

His characteristic way of expressing this was that:

> Father, Son and Spirit are one in 'substance.' Thus Father and Son are one identical substance which has been, not divided, but 'extended;' the Saviour's claim, 'I and my Father are one' (unum) indicates that the Three are 'one reality,' not 'one person' (unus), pointing as it does to identity of substantia with the Father and the Son and the Spirit are consortes substantiae partis; . . . the Father is the whole substance while Son is a derivation from and portion of the whole . . . the threeness applies only to 'grade,' (gradus) or 'aspect' (forma) or 'manifestation' (species).[3]

One readily can see how dangerously close this came, in the final summary, to Sabellian modalism. Revelations, Son and Holy Spirit, are

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[1]Rees, op. cit., 125. [2]Ibid., 127.

[3]Quoted from, Kelly, op. cit., 113-14.
But Cf. Tertullian, "Apology," op. cit., 11-13,21.
Tertullian, "Against Praxeas," 2.3.9.19. 25.

God, but not at once and the same time, Father, nor is the Spirit, Son. The unity involves neither co-equality nor co-eternity, nor identity of person but oneness of substance.

Hippolytus visciously attacked Sabellius who got a little support from Callistus of Rome. Callistus was "driven to excommunicate the leaders on either side, both Sabellius and Hippolytus."[1] Origen, the early systematic theologian of the Eastern Church, "the ally of Hippolytus,"[2] was condemned by Rome.

Origen "was particularly opposed to modalism,"[3] which sacrificed the distinction of Father, Son and Spirit for the sake of their oneness. Along with Western orthodoxy, Origen propounds[4] the oneness (unius) of the substance of the Son and Spirit. He sets forth systematically his philosophy of the One and the Many. One represents the only reality, substance, existence. He meets the most exacting demands of monotheism by insisting that the fullness of unoriginate Godhead is in the Father alone, Who is the "fountain-head of deity."[5]

The Father, Son and Holy Spirit, along with Tertullian, are one-in-three, but not merely 'manifestations,' 'aspects,' 'grades' but 'three persons,' distinct hypostasis from all eternity from which comes his distinctive doctrine of eternal generation.

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[1]Bethune-Baker, loc. cit., 106. [2]Ibid.

[3]McGiffert, op. cit., 223.

[4]Origen, "DePrincipiis," ed. by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, The Ante-Nicene Fathers (Buffalo: The Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1885), IV, 242-382.

[5]Ibid.; Cf. Origen, op, cit., Bk. I. 11:1, 2.

Origen explains that God must impart himself, which he did, and chose to effect this revelation of himself in the Logos; for this reason the Logos exists, and has a personal subsistance, but one otherwise, with the Father. This required organ for revelation, Logos, is effected, generated, as the will proceeds from the mind, as brilliance from light, eternal and everlasting.

The Logos became flesh, Son. That brings the idea of the eternal generation of the Son; He is not merely an act in time but outside of time. This "is Origen's chief permanent contribution to the doctrine of the person of Christ"[1] in the trinity of dogma.

The Son is of the Father's will, which is his very essence thus making the Son of the Father's essence. However, since the Son is of the will of the Father he is also begotten. The Father is first in the trinity; the Son is second; the Son is eternal with the Father in that he is of the Father's will,[2] which was from the beginning. There was a time when the Son was not, that is, as one of three, for he was 'begotten,' made by the Father; yet, there was never a time when he was not in that he was of the substance of the source of all being; herein is Origen's eternalness and oneness, not in person, numerically. In relation to the God of the universe the Son merits a secondary degree of honor. This subordination is discernable in Tertullian but the thorough-going worked-out subordinationism is integral to Origen's trinitarian scheme. "We may call Him a second God . . . receiving honor second only to that which is given the Most High God."[3]

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[1]Bethune-Baker, op. cit., 148. [2]Origen, op. cit., I, 11:6.

[3]Origen, "Against Celsus," op. cit., V. 39, VII, 57.

"In the East the greatest foe of monarchianism in every form was Origen."[1] He could not bare the thought of no distinctions in the Godhead nor a blurring of the personalities of the triad. Though Origen never doubted the 'oneness,' he was more interested in the Son's subordination than in this 'oneness.' It is almost inevitable that distinction be emphasized at the expense of oneness (unius) and one God, monotheism. (unum) and that oneness be emphasized at the expense of distinctions.

Equally with eternal generation, distinctions, one-in-three, and subordination Origen asserts that Christ was real man with no element lacking in his humanity that is necessary to man and at the same time nothing lacking in his divine nature. Godhead and manhood coexist, like fire and metal in red-hot iron.

In regards to the Holy Spirit and the trinity, Origen seems to bog-down. "On the work of the Spirit . . . Origen is full and clear . . . /but/ ambiguity appears in Origen's doctrine of the nature of the Spirit."[2] "The Holy Spirit was a necessary incidental."[3] "Origen sometimes seems to speak of Son and Spirit as coeternal, and yet not quite divine."[4] Nevertheless, there is trinity in Origenism but non-definitive and undeveloped in regards to Spirit for his primary interest was not trinity but distinction between Father and Son without destroying their oneness of essence.

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[1]McGiffert, op. cit., 312.

[2]Rees, op. cit., 132, 134.
Cf. Origen, "De Principiis," op. cit., I, 3:1; II, 7:2.

[3]McGiffert, op. cit., 220. [4]Hardy, op. cit., 17.

Before the classical formulation of the trinitarian dogma was made in the fourth century by the Cappadocians there is another position which one in that day could have adopted, Arianism, named after Arius, presbyter of Alexandria, (A. D. 256-336). "Origen's theory of eternal generation had no meaning for him."[1] "Arius developed one side of Origen's speculations ignoring others."[2] "Arius made use of the subordination elements in Origen's system to construct his own academic one."[3]

> One could adopt the course and say that God the Father alone is God in the true sense. Then the Word known on earth was another, a second and subordinate divine entity--*theos kai kurios heteros*. Arius formalized this subordination.[4]

To Arius God alone is unknowable and separate from every created being. Being, God, was too remote to be incarnate and man too low to be capable of receiving deity but intermediate beings could connect God and man while themselves being neither. Such a person, "intermediate being" was the Son of God, Jesus, who appeared on earth in the body being neither God nor man, truly. Arius' Christ was a demigod.

> We are persecuted because we say, "The Son has a beginning but God is without beginning." For this we are persecuted because we say, "He is made out of things that were not." But

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[1]Albert Henry Newman, *A Manual of Church History* (Revised and enlarged, 2 Vols., Philadelphia: The American Baptist Publication Society, 1947), I, 236.

[2]Hardy, *op. cit.*, 19. [3]Richardson, *op. cit.*, 120.

[4]Hardy, *op. cit.*, 15.

this is what we say, since he is neither a part of God nor formed out of any substratum.[1]

The following verse is attributed to Arius by Athanasius:

If you want Logos doctrine, I can
serve it hot and hot:
God begat him and before he was
begotten he was not.[2]

Arius contended for a triad. "Thus there are three hypostases,"[3] which Roche Hardy clarifies by saying, "Epiphanius and Hilary add, perhaps correctly 'Father, Son and Holy Spirit,'--one sees why the term 'three hypostases' was long suspect at Alexandria, as suggesting three different kinds of being."[4] Arius considered the Holy Spirit's "essence as utterly unlike that of the Son's, just as the Son's was utterly unlike that of the Father,"[5]

The foregoing is thought of as the 'extreme Arianism.' There was a semi-Arian position one could have adopted which asserted that the natures of the Father and Son were alike but not identical.

A history of trinity of dogma could be well nigh complete by the explanation of the use of a series of technical terms, the understanding

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[1]Arius, "The Letter of Arius to Eusebius of Nicomedia," Christology of the Later Father, Library of Christian Classics (ed. by Edward Rochie Hardy. Philadelphia: The Westminister Press, 1954), III, 330.

[2]Quoted from Dorothy Sayer's, The Emperor Constantine (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1951), 119.

[3]Arius, "The Confession of the Arians," op. cit., 333.

[4]Hardy, op. cit., 333. [5]Kelly, op. cit., 255.

in the minds of the various theologians using them, the misunderstanding, and final definitions which make up the developed doctrines. The terms were widely in use in the early part of the third century.

There was the Greek word, hypostasis, and the Latin equivalent, substantia, which were used to express the essential being, nature of Father, Son and Spirit, separately or that which was common to Father, Son and Spirit. In controversies the Greek term had the advantage of being a New Testament term (Heb. 1:3). Another Greek term for essence or substance was ousia; and if one wished to say that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit were of the same essential being they would say "homoousius."

The Latin substantia, "standing under," and hypostasis could be taken in two different senses.

> It could mean the principle of differentiation . . .; and that is what hypostasis came to mean in the orthodox formula of the Trinity, three hypostasis and one essence or ousia. But it could also mean the fundamental essence behind the two modes of God's being . . . the being of God it self. That is what the Latin meant by substantia, when they contrasted three persons and one substance.[1]

Then we have the Greek, prōsōpŏn, and the Latin, persŏna or "person." "Their common unity is designated in Greek as ousia and in Latin as substantia, in the sense of substratum."[2] When one realizes the connotations possible[3] for persona which represents the Greek hypostasis, which could be taken in two different senses, awareness of the theological battle over terms becomes more vivid.

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[1]Richardson, op. cit., 64. [2]Wolfson, op. cit., 333.

[3]Wheeler H. Robinson, The Christian Experience of the Holy Spirit (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1928), 254.

> "Person," or to use the Greek term, hypostasis means a distinct entity . . . When we think of person we tend to think in psychological terms . . . primarily a center of self-consciousness. But the earlier attitude was opposite of this. Not self-consciousness, but confrontation was the underlying idea. A person was a prosopon, a "facing towards" (as the word literally means in Greek) or a persona, a "sounding through," as it means in Latin . . . Persona thus could mean a mask worn by actors . . . Father and Son were thus distinguishable in terms, not of self-consciousness, but of presenting a special "face" . . . or aspect of being. The term which really expressed what was intended is that of "mode" of being."[1]

In the translation of terms scholars have been compelled to use these etymological equivalents; yet, the results have been grave misfortune for the professional and popular understanding of trinitarian doctrine. These words have suffered greatly in their history and have been the source of suffering to many minds that wanted to be together and understand if only etymological equivalents had been synonymous in meaning. Volumes are needed to hold the arguments over terms in trinitarian dogma.

This brings us to the last major consideration in our background necessary for introducing the classical theologians of the fourth century and their definitive teaching. Orthodoxy comes to grips with schismatic Arius through theologian, Athanasius, resulting in the first authorized statement of orthodox trinitarianism, the Nicene Creed, formed at the Council of Nicea (325 A. D.).

> Actually it was Athanasius who, at the beginning of the fourth century presented the main challenge of religion to philosophical theory, not in the person of its great representative, Origen, but in the person of Arius.[2]

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[1]Richardson, op. cit., 63. [2]Ibid., 119.

The primary interest of Athanasius and his cohorts as opponents of Arianism was in the deity of Christ. Was he fully divine, in the precise sense of the term, therefore really akin to the Father, or was he after all a creature, superior no doubt to the rest of creation, but all the same separated by an unabridgeable chasm from the Godhead? Was he like, or unlike, or of the same ousia, substantia with God the Father? At the end of the third century and the first decades of the fourth, "here we must largely confine ourselves to the Greek-speaking section of the Church. Little . . . survives to show what Western theologians were thinking."[1]

There were two types of Origenism in vogue.[2] One is represented by Alexander, bishop of Alexandria (313-328) who called Arius to Nicea. He stressed the oneness, co-eternalness of the Son with the Father, making full use of Origen's eternal generation. The other type of emphasis was made by Eusebius of Caesarea, the church historian, making the most of Origen's subordinationism, which bordered very close to Arius' Christ as a demigod, not divine, nor human.

> At this moment Athanasius sets out the central theme of the Alexandrian Christology at its best. His chief concern is with the power of the new life in Christ which we share; his divinity makes his life mighty and his humanity makes it ours . . . Athanasius can say simply of the incarnate Word that "he was made man," and certainly does not mean to imply that he was a reduced humanity.[3]

In 325 A. D. the Emperor Constantine called an ecclesiastical council to meet at Nicaea in Bythinia. He had shown favor to the

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[1]Kelly, op. cit., 223. [2]Ibid. [3]Hardy, op. cit., 18.

Christians and hoped to gain their further support for his empire by uniting them. The Arian schism was threatening the unity of the Christian body, which Constantine deemed essential to harmony within his domain. It was suggested to him, perhaps,[1] by the Spanish bishop of Hosius, who was very influential at court, that if a synod were to meet representing the whole church, both East and West, it might be possible to restore harmony. So, here we see an inner connection between theology and political welfare and politics playing an important roll in the background leading to the first orthodox statement of the Church. A united Church and a unified empire both were at stake.

The Council was attended by clerics from the East and West, the latter being in the minority, but "the ideas of Athanasius entered into the general stock of Western theology."[2] While bishops alone were members of the Council, Arius and Athanasius were there. At the time, Arius was a presbyter and Athanasius a deacon in the Church. "They had no vote and took no public part in the deliberations,"[3] yet, their ideas were the center of the theological discussion.

To maintain the unity of deity, Arianism had to take away divinity from Jesus. For salvation to be of God, and real, Athanasius had to contend for the deity of Jesus as redeemer and at the same time maintain the 'oneness' of the Godhead. The one word by which Athanasius championed his view and made possible the first generally accepted statement of orthodox trinitarianism is homoousios. It is not found in Scripture even

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[1] McGiffert, op. cit., 258.

[2] Hardy, "Introduction to Athanasius," op. cit., 49.

[3] McGiffert, loc. cit.

as trinity or triad cannot be found there. "The word homoousios was wrung out of a soul who had found salvation."[1] "Ousia and hypostasis, in the Nicene Creed, had no distinction between them and Athanasius drew no distinction between them."[2] "Athanasius actually introduced a word unknown to tradition and by strength of his vision compelled the Church to accept it."[3]

> It was a layman's term for a way of saying Christ was divine - not a theological term . . . no theologian quite liked it . . . unwelcome to many of those who accepted it . . . it suggested to them that God was broken into fragments - something like the phrase of our modern Faith and Order Conference, "Jesus Christ as God and Savior."[4]

But the bishops, on the ground of adding the homoousious, produced the following statement:

> We believe in one God . . . And in one Lord Jesus Christ, begotten of the Father uniquely, that is of the substance of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father . . . And in the Holy Spirit.[5]

"Thus it was declared that they used the phrase 'of the substance' to indicate his being of the Father, but not as if it were a part of the

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[1]Richardson, op. cit., 120. [2]McGiffert, op. cit., 268.

[3]Richardson, loc. cit.

[4]Hardy, "Introduction to Faith, Theology and Creeds," op. cit., 20.

[5]From the Creed drawn up at the Council and quoted from, Eusebius, "The Letter of Eusebius of Caesarea Describing the Council of Nicea," Christology of the Later Fathers, The Library of Christian Classics (ed. by Edward R. Hardy, Philadelphia: The Westminister Press, 1954), III, 338.

Father."[1] "Athanasius was as much Sabellian as an Apollinarian, but he saved Monotheism."[2]

The Church having established in her dogma the full deity of Christ at Nicaea still merely declared her belief in the Holy Spirit without declaring her doctrine about Spirit. But sometime between this first draft of the Nicene Creed and its final formulation at the Council of Constantinople in 381 the Church got around to declaring what she understood by the Holy Spirit, for which great credit goes to the Cappadocians.

So the Nicene Creed presented the basis of the common faith but "it introduced a sharpness of definition which was new, and in the process raised new and difficult questions."[3] The main result of Athanasius' life-work was to turn focused attention upon the consideration of how there could be three subjects, hypostases, in one nature, ousia, of the Godhead. If the Father and Son were clearly defined by the Church as one substance, how were they distinct, and how, now, would one think of the eternal Son, begotten of God, uniquely, and really "made man?"

The three Cappadocians[4] were coming on the scene at this time. There was Basil of Caesarea (329-379) commonly called Basil the Great. Then there was Gregory of Nazianzen, also born about 329, but in southwest section of Cappadocia. He was commonly referred to as Gregory the Theologian. Unlike Basil who died just before the great ecumenical council of 381, Gregory lived through it until late 389 or early 390.

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[1]Eusebius, op. cit. [2]Richardson, loc. cit.

[3]Hardy, op. cit., 21.

[4]Cappadocia, a province in the East, Asia Minor.

Gregory of Nyssa, a younger brother of Basil was the third of the Cappadocian Fathers whose death is fixed at about 394.

> Cappadocia produced in the fourth century three distinguished church teachers . . . who stand in strong contrast with general character of their countrymen; for the Cappadocians were generally described as cowardly, servile and deceitful.[1]

Basil and Gregory of Nazianzen met at the school in Caesarea and studied together at Athens becoming bosom friends academically and spiritually. Both came from prominent families of the church; Gregory's father was a bishop. It is not known where or how Basil's brother received his education but it was one of no disrepute. All three went through years of intensive study, disciplined monastic life, climbing to the seats of authority, bishoprics, so designated by their titles.

Philip Schaff contrasts the three Cappadocians and at the same time makes a superb summarization when he says of Gregory the theologian:

> . . . inferior to his bosom friend, Basil, as a Church ruler, and to his namesake of Nyssa as a speculative thinker, but superior to both as an orator.[2]

The growing power and influence of the three men is made clear by Eusebius[3] "who wanted the intellectual power of Basil and Gregory of Nazianzen but was soon eclipsed by them and he treated Basil badly."[4]

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[1]Schaff, op. cit., 894. [2]Schaff, op. cit., 909.

[3]Now Bishop of Caesarea so placed by Emperor Julian.

[4]Edmond Venables, "Basilius of Caesarea," Dictionary of Christian Biography (ed. by William Smith and Henry Wace, London: John Murray, 1877), I, 283.

Perhaps the most powerful and influential one was Basil of whom it is said, "champion of orthodoxy in the East," "restorer of union to the divided Oriental Church," and "promoter of unity between the East and West."[1]

> The Cappadocian fathers . . . grew up with the Semi-Arians and were Origenistic in sympathy[2] and strongly opposed to Sabellianism. But they also felt the influence of Athanasius and recognized the Nicene Creed,[3] already a half century old, as authoritative.[4]

Provoking the work and writings of the Cappadocians was the contemporary attack of the Macedonians on the Holy Spirit. They were known also as Pneumatomachians, 'Spirit-fighters' led by Eustathius of Sebaste who preferred homoeousios, 'like in substance,' choosing not to call the Spirit, God, nor call him a creature but give him a middle position, giving Father and Son the sole relationship in the Godhead; He could be no more God than other spirits.[5]

There were the Ocacians or Homoeans, led by Acacius, called the party of the compromise, but in effect were recognized as Arians since their key word was 'like.' Eunomius led the Eunomians, or Anomoeism, called new-Arianism because their watch-word was[6] that the Son is unlike the Father in all things to prohibit use 'of the same substance' or 'of like substance.'

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Basil and Gregory of Naz. made an anthology of Origen's works.

[3] "The Creed represents more clearly the moderate position of the Cappadocians than that of Athanasius and his associates." McGiffert, op. cit., 274.

[4] Ibid., 267. [5] Cf. Kelly, op. cit., 260. [6] Ibid., 248, 249.

Apollinarianism had to be contested. Apollinarius believed[1] in the deity of Christ as set forth in the Nicene Creed and the fusion of the two natures, deity and human flesh, but the human personality was not in Jesus; the second person of the trinity took the place of the human personality in the body of Jesus, making him semi-human.

The Bishop of Ancyra, Marcellus, was another point of embattlement. A supporter of homoousious but giving it Sabellian interpretation and condemns the Origenistic eternal generation. "Sabellian . . . and his theology and that of the much more familiar Marcellus of Ancyra were hopelessly confused.[2] He insisted the Son was a temporary manifestation of the Father and gives no permanence to the Son.

From 361 to 381 are years of great importance in the history of the Christian doctrine. During these twenty years, "the main lines of Christian theology were laid down, but its development was by no means over."[3]

Non-schismatic Christian men now believed that the three are one and one is directly known in the three. As has been said, it is broadly true, and agreed by theologians, that the Eastern emphasis fell upon the three who are one and in the West it fell upon the one who is three. This problem of relating the three who are one in definitive formulation of classical doctrine for the Church was faced by our Cappadocian Fathers.

> Basil brought out the real significance of the Holy Spirit; his brother, Gregory of Nyssa developed distinctions which were

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[1]Cf. Schaff, op. cit., 39; McGiffert, op. cit., 256, 277, 282.

[2]Kelly, op. cit., 122. [3]Hardy, op. cit., 31.

largely verbal developments of metaphor and Gregory of Nazianzen helps us see the varieties and uncertainties of opinion at the time when the formula was being framed.[1]

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[1]Robinson, op. cit., 253.
Cf. Reinhold Seeberg, History of Doctrines in the Ancient Church, Text-Book of the History of Doctrines (trans. by Charles E. Hay; Philadelphia: Lutheran Publication Society, 1950), II, 224, 225 for a treatment of Gregory's verbal development of metaphors.

CHAPTER II

THE CONCEPT OF GOD

In a sense it can be said that the controversy in trinitarianism was over the nature of God in heaven. What is God like? And the answer to this question becomes more momentous when the divinity of Jesus is entertained and some acceptance of his being in a Godhead, not necessarily "of" the Godhead, is made a part of faith. The question grows to a more gigantic proportion upon mental assent to the true human nature of Jesus. If Jesus is truly human and divine, what is God like? At this point the trinitarianism of the Cappadocians begins though they declare with one voice that the question cannot be answered.

> Therefore we must begin thus: It is difficult to conceive God, but to define him in words is an impossibility . . . In my opinion it is impossible to express him . . . and this, not merely to the utterly careless and ignorant, but even to those who are highly exalted and who love God, and in like manner to every created nature. Now the subject of God is more hard to come at in proportion as it is more perfect than any other.[1]

They begin honestly in this manner of humbly confessing their inability to fully comprehend divine nature. However this is more than merely an involvement of honesty. It is their way of asserting a supreme

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[1]Gregory of Nazianzus, "The Second Theological Oration - On God," The Library of Christian Classics, ed. by Edward Rochie Hardy, (Christology of the Later Fathers; Philadelphia: The Westminister Press, 1954), III, 138.

being; for to fully comprehend God would be to circumscript him and thereby a supreme deity would not be real but imaginary.

> Now why have I gone to all this? . . . To make clear the point at which my argument has aimed from the first . . . that the divine nature cannot be apprehended by human reason . . . For what does the Word prefer to rational creatures? Why that their very existence is a proof of his supreme goodness.[1]

Not once is there a trace of doubt that a supreme being exists: "Our very eyes and the law of nature teach us that God exists."[2] "That God is I know but what his essence is, I hold to be above reason; . . . faith is competent to know that God is, not what he is."[3] Despite this forthright acknowledgment the Cappadocian Fathers set forth a dogma on the Godhead and practically defy[4] anyone who differs with them to claim Christian grace.

> If indeed, we could find something to support the mind in its uncertainty . . . it would be well. But if . . . reason proves unequal to the problem we must guard the tradition . . . as ever sure and immovable, and seek from the Lord a means of defending our faith.[5]

We will begin our attempt to set forth the system of thought about the supreme one by starting with Gregory of Nyssa's first point,

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[1]Ibid., 143. [2]Ibid.

[3]St. Basil, "On the Holy Spirit," Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers (2nd. Series, ed. by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. New York: The Christian Literature Co., 1945), VIII, 16, 17, 18.

[4]Ibid., "Letter CCXXXIV," 274.

[5]Gregory of Nyssa, "An Answer to Ablabius: That We Should Not Think of Saying There Are Three Gods," The Library of Christian Classics (ed. by Edward Rochie Hardy, Christology of Later Fathers; Philadelphia: The Westminister Press, 1954), III, 257.

"Therefore we must confess one God, as Scripture bears witness, 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one Lord,' (Dt. 6:4) even though the term "Godhead" embraces the holy Trinity."[1]

> In our teaching of the knowledge of God . . . the same thing is subject to number and yet escapes it; it is observed to have distinctions and is yet grasped as a unity; it admits distinctions of Persons, and yet is not divided.[2]

With these declarations he was trying to refute two extremes, the polytheism of the Greeks, "the divine monarchy is not split up and divided into a variety of divinities,"[3] and on the other hand, the monotheism of the Jews, "neither does our teaching conform to Jewish doctrine."[4] His belief was that the Christian truth was to be found in between these two conceptions and in order to find that meridian there had to be an acceptance of some truth in both extremes.

> The unity of the nature [of God] must be retained from the Jewish conception, while the distinction of Persons, and that only, from the Greek. . . . For the triune number is . . . a remedy for those in error about the unity; while the affirmation of the unity is a remedy for those who scatter their beliefs among a multitude of Gods.[5]

In order to understand the Cappadocians' thinking on the supreme being, we must go, once again, back to his nature, which is ineffable, and whatever that is, which is incomprehensible, that is God in the

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[1]Ibid., 258.

[2]Gregory of Nyssa, "Address on Religious Instruction," op. cit., 273.

[3]Ibid., 274. [4]Ibid. [5]Ibid.

absolute. Gregory of Nyssa declares that whatever terms there are that lead to a knowledge of God it is clear that the divine nature is not signified by any one, or all, of these terms.[1] "We must now make a more careful examination of the word, 'Godhead,' in order that we may get some help in clarifying the matter."[2]

Gregory begins by denouncing what he declares "most people think"[3] that the 'Godhead' refers in a special way, to God's nature. "We, however, have learned that His nature cannot be named and . . . every name, whether invented by humans or handed down by Scripture . . . does not signify what that nature is."[4] By thought and expression we rightfully and correctly ascribe to the divine nature incorruptibility, "which does not express what that nature essentially is."[5]

> Our idea of incorruptibility is this: that that which is not resolved to decay. In saying, then, that He is incorruptible, we tell what His nature does not suffer. But what that is which does not suffer corruption we have not defined.[6]

Gregory of Nyssa asserts that by the foregoing he has proved that 'Godhead' signifies an operation of the supreme being and not a nature,[7] "Godhead does not (even) refer to a nature."[8]

> We say that we know our God from His operations, but we do not undertake to approach near His essence. His operations come down to us, but His essence remains beyond our reach.[9]

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[1]Gregory of Nyssa, "On not Three Gods," op. cit., 259.

[2]Ibid. [3]Ibid. [4]Ibid. [5]Ibid. [6]Ibid. [7]Ibid., 261.

[8]Ibid. [9]Basil, loc. cit.

As we have observed, "Godhead embraced the holy Trinity,"[1] which denotes number but our theologians are swift to state that neither term 'Godhead,' or 'trinity' teach more than one nature, ousia,[2] for the supreme being and that belief in only one essence does not make invalid, nor illogical, distinctions within the one supreme being. Their classic illustrations are like Gregory of Nyssa's:

> There are many who have shared the same nature - disciples, apostles, martyrs, - but the "man" in them all is one . . . the nature is one, united in itself, a unit completely indivisible, which is neither increased by addition nor diminished by subtraction, being and remaining essentially one, inseparable even when appearing in plurality, continuous and entire, and not divided by the individuals who share it . . . Therefore we must confess one God. . . .[3]

The one God, undivided is the first unbegotten, the cause, source of all, but "no one would hold that cause and nature are identical."[4] "We learn that he is unbegotten," nor is "the Father by generation."[5] Gregory teaches: "It is necessary for us first to believe that something exists . . . what exists is one thing: the manner of existence is another."[6] This manner of existence he explains is the 'unbegottenness' or non-generation of the supreme being, which he explains as the "mode of existence."[7]

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[1]Gregory of Nyssa, op. cit., 258.

[2]"The habit of giving a plural significance to the word for a nature is mistaken." Gregory of Nyssa, op. cit., 264.

[3]Ibid. [4]Ibid., 266. [5]Ibid., 266, 267. [6]Ibid.

[7]Ibid., 267.

We must go to Gregory of Nazianzus, the theologian, for a more detailed account of the above doctrines, which Gregory of Nyssa has merely stated:

> The Father is the begetter and the emitter; without passion of course, and without reference to time, and not in a corporeal manner. The Son is begotten[1] and the Holy Ghost[2] is the emission.[3]

God the Father is not begotten, created, derived in any manner or from anything; he is ungenerated, uncaused because he is "One whose very existence had no beginning,"[4] and "we for our part will be bold to say . . . it is a great thing for the Father to be unoriginate."[5] "The Father granted the principle of existence"[6] to everyone and every thing. "The Father precedes the Son according to the relation of causes to the things which proceed from them."[7]

> And he is Father in the absolute sense, for he is not also Son; just as the Son is Son in the absolute sense, because he is not Father also.[8]

The Cappadocians, with one voice, declare they want it understood that these terms such as "unbegotten" are being used to set forth their

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[1]John 3:16. [2]John 15:26.

[3]Gregory of Nazianzus, "The Third Theological Oration - On the Son," op. cit., 161.

[4]Ibid., 162. [5]Ibid., 168.

[6]Basil, "Letter XXXVIII" 6, op. cit., 137. [7]Ibid.

[8]Gregory of Nazianzus, op. cit., 162.

doctrine of God only because they are "terms convenient for human intelligence."[1]

> The title "unbegotten" will not be preferred by us to that of Father, unless we wish to make ourselves wiser than the Savior, who said 'Go and baptize in the name of,' not the 'Unbegotten,' but, 'of the Father.'[2]

"Father" and "God" are used interchangeable by the Cappadocians and "unbegotten" is consistently used to modify both titles. But as we have previously shown Gregory of Nyssa declared that Father, Son and Spirit, which defines the "Godhead" are operations of the supreme being, God. This gives a secondary, if not inferior, place to the term, "Father." However, Basil, in no uncertain terms says, "The word 'Father' implies all that is meant by 'Unbegotten.' He who is essentially Father alone is alone of no other."[3] This states that 'Father' reaches back far enough to grasp supreme being. But according to his brother, it does not, neither does it for Gregory of Nazianzus for he says "one whose existence had a beginning must also have begun to be father."[4] In other words, he was God before he was Father in operation, or in trinity, or became a Godhead, which is in agreement, essentially, with Gregory of Nyssa. Distinctions must not be sacrificed at any cost is their position. However, in the same breath, in order to preserve their three-in-one theology they declare that though God had a beginning as Father in operation, in essence, substantia, he had

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[1]Basil, "Against Eunomius," op. cit., 1:5. [2]Ibid. [3]Ibid.

[4]Gregory of Nazianzus, loc. cit. Also, he says, "God and unbegotten are not the same thing." Ibid.

no beginning as Father for "He did not then become a father after he began to be."[1]

"In the eyes of the Cappadocians God is the source, fountainhead, of the Godhead . . . Trinity,"[2] which is Father, Son and Spirit.

> These properties do not belong to the divine essence (God) any more than immortality, innocence, immutability. Otherwise there would be several divine essences. That is the divine essence that belongs to God alone, but we cannot know that essence, as has been already shown.[3]

In one breath the Cappadocians seem to have God making himself Father and imparting himself in the two other persons, and in another breath they are having God impart himself to the three.[4] "Now the name of that which has no beginning is the Father,"[5] as though he was Father first, thus contradicting his own statement in his oration previously cited asserting that the one whose existence had a beginning must have begun as Father. Herein we see sympathy with Origenistic theology, which placed God the Father "altogether Monad, and indeed, if it may so express it, Henad."[6] Again, we have Gregory of Nazianzus declaring, "The Triad adores the Monad and Monad adores the Triad."[7]

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[1]Ibid. [2]Kelly, op. cit., 265, 263.

[3]Gregory of Nazianzus, loc. cit.

[4]Basil, "Letter CCXXIV," op. cit., 278.

[5]Gregory of Nazianzus, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers (ed. by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace; New York: The Christian Literature Press, 1894), VII, 390.

[6]Origen, "De Princippiis," op. cit., 1, 6.

[7]From Oration 25, 17 as quoted from Kelly, op. cit., 266.

We have observed no where in the writings of scholars that this last quotation asserts not "three-in-one" but "four-in-one;" however, that is what appears to be asserted, ultimately, to us. Although, reaching beyond the Father, which is an operation of God, is asserting, we think a quadral, a being divided into four parts. However, we are quick to restate the Cappadocians' constant reiteration that any number of distinctions of hypostases in no way rends the oneness of the ousia, one God, assunder.

A final point to make in setting forth the Cappadocians' idea of God is that, although his essence is not actually known or ever can be, worshipping God, that unknown being is not worshipping, that which one does not know. Basil's enemies tormented him thus:

> Do you worship what you know or what you do not know? If I answer, I worship what I know, they immediately reply, What is the essence of the object of worship? Then if I confess that I am ignorant of the essence, they turn on me again and say you worship what you do not know.[1]

His answer was that the word "to know" has many meanings and to say that one knows not the essence of God is not to declare he is ignorant of God, "because our idea of God has been declared from all the attributes which I have enumerated."[2] Basil declared the divine essence to be manifested in Father, Son and Spirit and as awful, just, and merciful, "these we confess we know"[3] so do not worship what we know not.

In conclusion we might use the words of Evagrius, Basil's cohort, "let it be said that we worship one God, one not in number but in nature,"[4]

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[1]Basil, loc. cit. [2]Ibid. [3]Ibid.

[4]Basil, "Letter VIII, II," loc. cit.

but at the same time he insists that in using number we must use it reverently pointing out that each of the persons cannot be added together nor torn apart.[1] 'God' is a term indicative of essence, as Gregory of Nyssa points out,[2] not declarative of persons and therefore it must always be used in the singular. God, this essence, being, imparts, or exists in more than one relation, mode of existence but the being remains one and the same.

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[1]Basil, "On the Holy Spirit," loc. cit.

[2]Gregory of Nyssa, "On not Three Gods," loc. cit.

CHAPTER III

THE CHRISTOLOGY

The unfolding of trinitarian dogma necessarily begins with the concept of the supreme being as one God having only one ousia, nature. However, the speculations on trinity had their origins in the study of the person, persona, of Christ. Trinity, as such, was in the background. At first the question agitating men's minds was the full deity of the Son.

> I wish to point to what seems to me the most fundamental issue . . . the difference between the Father and the Son. All trinitarian dogma ultimately hangs on this distinction.[1]

The Christology being the most fundamental issue inevitably exists as the hardest problem; therefore, it became the most comprehensive and bulky subject, not only of trinitarian dogma, but of all Christian theology.

The fact of a "Son of God" has not been a part of the dispute. But when did he become Son, and how he became Son, and what constituted the make-up of the Son, before the flesh, during, and after was the subject of argument. In definitive orthodox doctrine, the Son, in order to be true redeemer, must possess all divine attributes and at the same time enter all relations and conditions of man, that is: except sin, actually willfully, knowingly committing an act against the Father,[2] to raise man to God.

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[1]Richardson, op. cit., 19.

[2]See pages 57 and 58 for fuller explanation.

Ancient Christology usually began from above with the question, "How did the Son of God become--and become man?"[1] The Cappadocians worked in between the speculations of the extremists of their day. Arius summarizes the typical 'orthodox extremist' Bishop Alexander's phraseology in a letter to Eusebius stated:

> We do not agree with him when he says publicly, "Always Father, always son," "Father and Son together," "The Son exists unbegottenly with God," "The eternal begotten," "Unbegotten-only-one," "Neither in thought nor by a single instant is God before the Son," "Always God, always Son."[2]

On the other hand, we have the schisms of Arius expressly stated. "What is it that we say, and think, and have taught, and teach?"[3]

> That the Son is not unbegotten, nor a part of the unbegotten in any way, nor of any substratum, but that he was constituted by God's will and counsel, before times and before ages, full divine, unique, unchangeable. And before he was begotten or created or ordained or founded, he was not. For he was not unbegotten. We are persecuted because we say, "The Son has a beginning, but God is without beginning;" He is made out of things that were not . . . since he is neither a part of God nor out of any substratum.[4]

Of course, there was the middle-of-the-road position which we shall identify as the party of the Homoeousians to whom Athanasius made a

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[1]"Modern Christology is more likely to begin from below with historical records, and ask, "How can we say that this man is God, as Christian experience declares?" Hardy, op. cit., 382.

[2]Arius, "The Letter of Arius to Eusebius of Nicomedia," The Library of Christian Classics (ed. by Edward Rochie Hardy, Christology of the Later Fathers; Philadelphia: The Westminister Press, 1954), III, 330.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid. (Note: "full divine" denotes other than essence of the deity.)

"conciliatory gesture saluting the Homoeousians as brothers"[1] since there was such a narrow gap between them and the Nicene party. They recognized that the Son was 'out of the Father's ousia and not from another hypostasis.' However, 'identity,' homoousious, of substance was preferred to 'likeness,' homoeousious, of nature. The Cappadocians completed the full return of orthodoxy to the homoousion of the Son.

> In my opinion he is called Son because he is identical with the Father in essence.[2] The Logos is full of His Father's excellence differing from Him neither in ousia nor power.[3] The Father is God and the Son is God because there is no distinction in nature - the nature is undifferentiated.[4]

The tormentors of the Cappadocians would argue that if the Son is of the same essence as the God, and the one God is unbegotten, then the Son must be unbegotten also. But the retort always was, "the proper name of the unoriginate is 'Father,' and that of the unoriginately begotten is 'Son.'"[5]

In other words, Jesus Christ was Son of God because his essential nature was of identical essence with God the Father; and the Son was equally eternal with the Father, that is: unoriginate, because of this identical, homoousios, substance, ousia, nature, with God the Father;

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[1]Kelly, op. cit., 253.

[2]Gregory of Nazianzus, "The Fourth Theological Oration - Which Is The Second On The Son," op. cit., 190.

[3]Basil, "On The Holy Spirit," op. cit., 13, 28.

[4]Gregory of Nyssa, "On Not Three Gods," op. cit., 266.

[5]Gregory of Nazianzus, op. cit., 190.

therefore, and herein, we see the teaching of the Cappadocians upon "there was never a time when the Son was not," because his essential nature was unoriginate, "because he (Son) is of him (Father),"[1] "derived from the Fathers,"[2] and this is all that the Cappadocians taught when declaring that the Son is uncreated. "The account of the uncreate and of the incomprehensible is one and the same in the case of the Father and Son."[3]

> A reflective student . . . beholding the glory of Father and Son (identical nature) recognizes no void interval wherein his mind may travel between Father and Son . . . for there is nothing inserted between Them; nor beyond the divine nature is there anything . . . able to divide that nature from itself . . . neither . . . make a break in the mutual harmony of the divine essence . . . the continuity of nature being never rent assunder by the distinction of the hypostases.[4]

'Hypostasis,' according to the Cappadocians, was a "manifestation" of the one ousia, or a 'mode of existence' of the one substantia.

> But God, Who is over all, alone has, one special mark of His own hypostasis, His being Father, and His deriving His hypostasis from no cause; and through this mark He is peculiarly known.[5]

As this essence, namely: God, expressed itself as Father, the first hypostasis, so this being expressed itself in a second hypostasis, Son, who is very distinctly a 'mode of existence' of essence. "The Son has the Father as His cause; the distinguishing property of the Son is

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Basil, "Epistle XXXVIII," op. cit., 137.

[3] Ibid., 138. [4] Ibid., 139. [5] Ibid.

that He is generated,"[1] or "unoriginately begotten," as Gregory of Nazianzus said it;[2] "Though numerically distinct there is no severence of essence;"[3] and this non-severence of essence, and oneness of ousia, is all that is taught[4] in our theologians' doctrine of 'eternal generation' of the Son and the 'unbegotteness of the begotten.' "The question whether the Son existed before He was begotten is absurd, when eternal generation is thought of."[5]

> When did the Father come into being? There never was a time when He was not. And the same thing is true of the Son . . . Ask me again, and again I will answer you, When was the Son begotten? When the Father was not begotten.[6]

"Begotten and not-begotten are not the same thing."[7] Though the Son's essential nature was unbegotten, as Son, the second hypostasis of the essence, he was begotten, or generated, which was an impartation of the essence by the first peculiar manifestation, hypostasis, Father. This impartation of the divine being is the Son of God, Jesus of Nazareth, God made man assuming human flesh.

> How can this generation be passionless? In that it is incorporeal. For if corporeal generation involves passion, incorporeal excludes it . . . his generation according to

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[1]Ibid. [2]Gregory of Nazianzus, op. cit., 190.

[3]Gregory of Nazianzus, "Third Theological Oration - On the Son," op. cit., 161.

[4]Ibid., 260 ff. Basil, "Epistle LII," op. cit., 155, 156.

[5]Gregory of Nazianzus, op. cit. [6]Ibid., 161.

[7]Ibid.

> the flesh differs from all others (for where among men[1] do you know of a virgin mother?) so does he differ also in his spiritual generation; or rather he, whose existence is not the same as ours, differs from us also in his generation.[2]

There is no attempt to explain the generation or begetting of the Son. "This generation would have been no great thing, if you could have comprehended it who have no real knowledge of your own generation."[3] How was he begotten? "by fluxion, or by putting forth shoots, as plants put forth their fruits; on the contrary."[4]

> The begetting of God must be honored by silence . . . Shall I tell you how it was? It was in a manner known to the Father who begot, and to the Son who was begotten. Anything more than this is hidden.[5]

> "But grant that he who is begotten is God; for he is of God."[6]

> Yet I think that the person who wills is distinct from the act of willing, he who begets from the act of begetting, as the speaker from the speech - or else all are very stupid . . . But if you say that he that begot and that which is begotten are not the same, the statement is inaccurate . . . for the nature of the relation . . . is this: that the offspring is of the same nature with parent.[7]

Numerically distinct yet one in nature is the theology of the Cappadocians reiterated over and over and restated in expositions from every advantage point. The Father is Son and the Son is Father as the

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[1]He is here referring to men 'other' than Jesus.

[2]Ibid., 162. [3]Ibid., 164. [4]Basil, loc. cit.

[5]Gregory of Nazianzus, op. cit., 165. [6]Ibid., 167.

[7]Ibid., 164, 167.

Son is God and God is Son sharing essentially identical substance; but at the same time, the Father is not Son, and the Son is not Father for the essence has imparted itself into the hypostasis, Father, who has imparted the hypostasis, Son, two 'modes of existence' of the same nature, ousia. Having established in their doctrine this unity of essential being, the eternal existence and participation of the Son in the Godhead was fixed.

> What among all things that exist is unoriginate? The Godhead . . . All that is absolute and unoriginate we are to reckon to the account of his Godhead.[1]

But this left unreckoned with the manhood of the Son which was the next inevitable facet of Christological dogma to be established.

> For in truth he was in servitude to flesh and to birth and to the conditions of our life . . . what was the cause of this manhood, which for our sake God assumed? It was surely our salvation . . . with a view to our liberation . . . who were in bondage under sin.[2]

The salvation of the sinful soul of man wrapped in human nature was demanding a complete, full, human nature in God the Son. The

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[1]Gregory of Nazianzus, "The Fourth Theological Oration," op. cit., 178.

[2]Ibid.
"What has not been assumed cannot be restored; it is what is united with God that is saved. "Gregory of Nazianzus, "Epistle CI," 7, op. cit.; Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, Library of Christian Classics, "Why God Assumed Human Nature," op. cit., 304 ff.

Cappadocians were compelled to rise up against[1] their highly respected teacher, Apollinarius, who was forced to leave the church in 375. The full humanity had been acknowledged already at the Synod of Alexandria, 362; now the Cappadocians brought the full homoousios of Christ with humanity, not only God, into an exalted dogma.

> That which the Cappadocians were able to set up in opposition to Apollinarius were only wretched formulas full of contradiction: There are two natures, and yet only one; there are not two Sons, but the Divinity acts in one way, the humanity in another; Christ had human freedom, but acted under Divine necessity.[2]

Gregory of Nazianzus taught that Christ, Logos, before joining himself to man, "was not Man but God, and the only Son before all ages, unmingled with body."[3] The heavenly, incorporeal being, "Who was perfect God,"[4] joined himself to human flesh; "assumed Manhood, . . . who was perfect man and also God . . . For we do not sever the Man from the

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[1]"The Cappadocian fathers, led by Basil, had marshalled the case against Apollinarianism." Kelly, op. cit., 296.

"He was accused by Gregory of Nazianzus and Gregory of Nyssa of teaching that the flesh of the Lord was pre-existent. His body of clestial substance . . . not of the Virgin, but a portion of divine essence clothed in matter." Bethune-Baker, op. cit., 245.

[2]Harnack, op. cit., 279-280.

[3]Gregory of Nazianzus, "Epistle CI," Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, VII, 439.

[4]Ibid.

"If anyone does not believe that Holy Mary is Mother of God, he is severed from the Godhead." Ibid.

Godhead."[1] "For our Lord was of two natures . . . for although these two terms express but one person, this is not by a unit of nature, but by a union of the two."[2]

This union of the two natures was a commixture of the two minds also. "Do not let the men deceive themselves that our Lord and God is without human mind."[3]

> Gregory of Nazianzus teaches that the Logos comes to His own image, and bears flesh for the sake of my flesh, and conjoines Himself with an intelligent soul . . . and in all points, sin excepted, becomes man. Thus there are 'two natures concurring in unity' in the God-man, and He is 'twofold,' 'not two, but one from two;' and of course there are,' not two Sons.' His two natures are distinguishable in thought, and can be referred to as 'the one' and 'the other' but there are not two Persons; rather 'they both form a unity by their commingling, God having become man and man God.'[4]

The marked weakness of this theory in Gregory of Nazianzus was its failure to show clearly how these two minds and natures functioned as one. In fact he had to explain certain passages, one as from one mind and the other as from the second mind, thus denying 'not two, but one from two.'

A typical example of his ambiguousness is in the treatment of "of the last day and hour knoweth no man, not even the Son himself, but the Father."[5]

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Gregory of Nazianzus, Library of Christian Classics, op. cit., 182.

[3] Gregory of Nazianzus, "Epistle CI," loc. cit.

[4] Kelly, op. cit., 279. [5] Mark 13:32.

> How can wisdom be ignorant of anything - that is, wisdom who made the worlds . . . what can be more perfect than this knowledge? . . . Everyone must see that he knows as God, and knows not as man . . . we are to understand the ignorance in the most reverent sense, by attributing it to manhood, and not to the Godhead.[1]

Others have found him explaining "the Son could be said to be ignorant since He derived His knowledge from the Father,"[2] The growth of Christ's knowledge "and other experiences he explained away clearly regarding the Logos and not the human mind as their subject."[3] He had a system of thought, 'commixture,' that he could not make 'conjointly.'

Gregory of Nyssa had a little different approach to the humanity of Christ and gave his human experiences a more realistic treatment. He conceived of the Godhead entering into and controlling the manhood of Christ, so that Jesus could be called, "the God-receiving man, the man in whom He tabernacled."[4] Christ, the God-part, tabernacled in Jesus, the man-part, and the former, as when allowed to dwell in any human soul, controlls the human nature, or will. This was not only his Christological dogma but also his attack upon the Apollinarians who could not accept the theory of two whole wills coexisting together. To our theologians, denial of the human free will, or the divine will, led to greater difficulties for faith and explanation of faith than asserting two wills and accepting

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[1]Gregory of Nazianzus, Library of Christian Classics, op. cit., 187-188.

[2]Kelly, op. cit., 298. [3]Ibid.

[4]Quoted from Kelly, loc. cit.

inability to fully explain the functioning. In fact, inability to comprehend was assurance of God really and truly in this man, Jesus. According to Gregory of Nyssa's account:

> The Holy Spirit at the incarnation first prepared the human body and soul as a special receptacle for the divinity, and the heavenly Son then 'mingled Himself' with them, the divine nature thereby becoming 'present in them both.' Thus 'God came into human nature,' but the manner of the union is as mysterious and inexplicable as the union between body and soul in man. In this 'mingling'[1] . . . the flesh was passive, the Logos the active, element, and a transformation of the human nature into the divine was initiated.[2]

However, as in Gregory of Nazianzus, the characteristics of the two natures remained distinguishable "as the flame of a lamp laying hold of the material on which it feeds."[3]

> Consequently, when Christ endured suffering or other human experiences, it was not His divinity which endured them, but 'the man attached by the union of the divinity;' they belonged 'to the human part of Christ.'[4]

The Godhead being impassible, remained unaffected, although "the two together form a single whole;"[5] through its concrete oneness with the humanity it indirectly participated in its limitations and weakness.

> Can we not preserve a right idea of God even when we hold to this connection, by believing that the divine is free from all circumspection despite the fact he is in man? . . . For

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[1] 'Mingling' (ὁ κρᾶσις was his favorite term). Ibid., 299.

[2] Ibid.; Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, op. cit., "The Incarnation," 286 ff.

[3] Gregory of Nyssa, Ibid., 288. [4] Kelly, op. cit., 299.

[5] Gregory of Nyssa, op. cit., 288.

> if our own intellectual nature is not enclosed in the limits of the flesh . . . is free to roam everywhere, why do we have to say the Godhead is confined . . . within the limits of the flesh as in a jar.[1]

In the same way Gregory could recognize in Jesus the real human will distinct from "and sometimes contrary to"[2] his divine will, "not what I will, but what thou wilt."[3] The divine will always prevailed, which seemed credited to the fact that Jesus did not ever sin, though his flesh was the same as man's fallen flesh; but because his human will always submitted due to sinlessness to the divine will, it overcame that fallen flesh and destroyed sin. "For though he took our filth upon himself, yet he is not himself defiled by the pollution: but in his own self he purifies the filth."[4] And "that is to say, the human will, though fallen, is able by union with the divine will to realize its true power."[5]

If Gregory allows full play to the human nature, though the divine always prevailing, during the earthly life of Christ, it changes with the resurrection.

> Then begins 'the transformation of the lowly into the lofty.' The immaterial essence of the Logos 'transelements' the material body born of the Virgin into the divine, immutable nature; the flesh which suffered becomes then, as a result of the union, identical with the nature which assumed it. Like a drop of vinegar which falls into the sea and is wholly absorbed, the

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[1]Ibid., 287, 288. [2]Kelly, op. cit. [3]Mark 14:36.

[4]Gregory of Nyssa, Antirrhet 26 Migne XIV, 1180, quoted from Bethune-Baker, op. cit., 252.

[5]Bethune-Baker, op. cit., 252.

> humanity loses all its proper qualities and is changed into divinity.[1]

Such was the definitive formula of the Cappadocians' Christology. These "theologians . . . for the most part . . . had little positive contribution to make to the solution of the Christological problem."[2] They stated for the Church unequivocally its generally accepted doctrine and caused the Church's repudiation of those who would deny their position. But there was still prevalent the thought of a dual, split personality as revealed by the ensuing Nestorian controversy. There was not a "thoroughly realistic acknowledgment of the human life and experiences of the Incarnate and of the theological significance of His human soul."[3] There are those who credit the later Antiochene School as supplying this: "it deserved credit for bringing back the historical Jesus."[4] But, as far as we are able to discern, the ecumenical council of Chalcedon (451)[5] made the doctrine of two natures in one person without confusion, change, division, separation, not parted or divided absolute dogma of orthodox trinitarianism, but the "how?" and comprehension of the "practical functioning" of this two natured God-man remains at large.

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[1]Kelly, op. cit., 300. Kelly cites one to Gregory of Nyssa's Against Eunomius as translated by J. P. Migne's Patrologia Graeca, 45, 693, 697.

[2]Kelly, op. cit., 301. [3]Ibid., 302. [4]Ibid.

[5]The Cappadocians surely were the forerunners of this creedal statement.

CHAPTER IV

THE HOLY SPIRIT

In a sense, it can be said that the doctrine of the trinity grew out of a search to understand God as he is in his heavens; and the speculations on trinity had their origin in the study of the person of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. No sooner was the person of Christ settled than the person (homoousios or heteroousios) of the Holy Spirit had to be tackled. 'Trinity' as the specific, or focal point, of argument and concern was still in the background; it was to be an inevitable result being fashioned simultaneously with the crystalizing of dogma concerning second and third persons of the deity.

In the New Testament and pre-Arian periods the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, the relation of the Spirit to the Father and to the Son, was not an acute issue. And it was the Paraclete of which Christ had so pointedly and forcefully spoken that he would send to the Apostles, after his ascension, to teach, guide, and empower them. But Christological controversy shadowed organized thought relative to the Holy Spirit; "its pecular offices of revelation and sanctification are more often assigned to the Son."[1] In worship, creeds, and formulas the Holy Spirit is associated with Father and Son and given place in trinitarian speculations, but doctrinal formulations dangled; such was the case at the time of the

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[1]Rees, op. cit., 141.

orthodox creedal statement of Nicea (325); the Holy Spirit was associated with trinity but verbiage was lacking.

Orthodoxy, up to this point, can be simply set forth as the faith that in Christ God himself appeared; Christ as the Logos and Son of God was of the same essence, therefore coeternal, with the supreme being; and in Christ God communicated himself to man that he might bring man to himself. It was the logic of this creedal thought, Nicean, that brought the Holy Spirit and its issues into the trinitarian controversy. If God had a second revelation, hypostasis, of himself, another medium of communication besides the Logos made flesh, the same reasoning would apply to it as to the Logos.

In unorthodox circles, if God was unknowable and unknown, the Spirit, like the Logos, must be of another essence than God, a creature. Again, if God really communicates himself by the Holy Spirit, his essence, of necessity, must be equally present in the Spirit as in the Logos. The choice of Arius and his followers seemed to lie between regarding the deity as unknown and unknowable or reducing him to nothing more than finite level.

> The majority of them chose the former alternative, and held that He was incomprehensible and incommunicable, and therefore the Logos, who was known, was of a different essence from God, a creature whom He had sent forth as His agent and messenger.[1]

This could lead to nothing else but identical logic in relationship to the Holy Spirit. It is a striking fact that the Council of Nicea simply affirmed, "I believe in the Holy Spirit," without homoousios, or any

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[1] Ibid., 140.

definition, and "there is no evidence that Arius speculated specially about the Holy Spirit."[1]

However, Arius did teach that the essences of the Father, Son, and Spirit were separate in nature, estranged and disconnected, alien from and without participation in one another. The one common opinion of all Arianism of the Holy Spirit was that it differs in substance and it is but a minister, third in order, honor and substance.

> Either the Church did not realize that the person of the Holy Spirit was virtually included in the Arian attack upon the Person of the Son, or she was not prepared to pronounce decisive judgment upon the Godhead of the Spirit, or as it is more probable, she was not concerned to anticipate heresy, or define the terms of Catholic communion more precisely than the occasion demanded.[2]

As we have pointed out, there is no evidence that Arius especially speculated about the person of the Holy Spirit; however, "it was not until the Arian principle had been explicitly applied to the Holy Spirit that any advance was made with the definition of the doctrine."[3] It seems logical to assume that the Arians got on this facet of theology before the Church because by so doing they were able to find support for their defeated doctrine of the inferiority and subordination of the Son. "The Arians solicited the farther formulation of the doctrine . . . exactly for this reason . . . the orthodox became thoughtful."[4]

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[1]Ibid., 142.

[2]Henry Barclay Swete, The Holy Spirit in the Ancient Church (London: MacMillan and Co., Ltd., 1912), 135.

[3]Rees, op. cit., 144, 145. [4]Harnack, op. cit., 267.

There were numerous Arian and Semi-Arian statements issued between 325 and 360 upon the work of the Holy Spirit but not until the second creed of Simirnium (357) was a formal definitive statement made. It denied both the homoousion and homoiousion of the Son and stated that the Spirit is through the Son, who sent it to instruct, teach and sanctify all apostles and believers. The explicit inference being that the Spirit could not possibly be of the same essence of the Father. "Eunomius called the Spirit a creature of a creature."[1] The full opponents of the deity of the Spirit were the Macedonians, or Pneumatomachians, Spirit-fighters. It is true that "in the year 381 the Macedonians were invited to the synod, but only to hear their condemnation and to be expelled."[2]

> But the controversy about the Spirit arose from the denial of its deity by the Semi-Arians, who acknowledged the deity of the Son under one of the two formulae, that He was of the same essence, or of like essence, as the Father.[3]

Of course, their formula was the latter for they maintained that the Holy Spirit differed in substance from the Father and Son and it is but the minister, and third in order, honor and substance.

> The Church once arroused she spared no effort to vindicate the uncreated nature of the Spirit of God . . . and in a series of great works . . . His co-essentiality with the Father and the Son was established.[4]
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> After 362[5] the theologians in the Occident were indefatigable in imposing upon the half-won Oriental brethren the Holy Spirit

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[1]Swete, op. cit., 182.

[2]Harnack, op. cit., 268.

[3]Rees, op. cit., 145.

[4]Swete, op. cit., 6.

[5]Council of Alexandria

> as homoousios and, in union with the Cappadocians they succeeded.[1]
>
> If Athanasius took the lead in defending the homoousion of the Spirit, the task was completed, cautiously and circumspectly, by the Cappadocians.[2]

Because of wide variety of opinion in both camps, orthodoxy and otherwise, "progress towards the full Athanasian position[3] was necessarily gradual."[4] Basil in 370 "was still carefully avoiding calling the Holy Spirit God."[5] In fact, Gregory of Nazianzus describes how Basil, preaching in 372, studiously abstained from speaking of the Holy Spirit's deity.[6] He even received great opposition for ascribing glory to the Holy Spirit in connection with the Father and Son. In his De Spiritu Sancto[7] (375) he takes the ultimate step and declares that the Spirit must be accorded the same glory, honor and worship as Father and Son and he must be "reckoned with" not "reckoned below" them.

> Lately when I was praying with the people, and using the full doxology to God the Father in both forms, at one time "with the Son together with the Holy Ghost," and at another "through the Son in the Holy Ghost," I was attacked by some of those present on the ground that I was introducing novel and at the same time mutually contradictory terms.[8]

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[1]Harnack, loc. cit., 268. [2]Kelly, op. cit., 258.

[3]Nicene Creed, really. [4]Kelly, op. cit., 260.

[5]Philip Schaff, History of the Christian Church, new and revised, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1886), III, 664.

[6]Gregory of Nazianzus, "Epistle LVIII," Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, op. cit., 455.

[7]Basil, "On the Spirit," Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, op. cit., 2-50.

[8]Ibid.

> They would sooner cut out their tongues than utter this phrase (viz. Glory to the Holy Ghost). They say the glory is to be given to God in the Holy Spirit, not to the Holy Spirit.[1]

Standing upon John 15:26 and the baptismal formula and the apostolic benediction and traditional trinitarian doxologies the Cappadocians put the Holy Spirit on an equality with the Father and Son requiring a divine tri-personality resting upon a unity of essence. The divine triad could tolerate in itself no inequality of essence, no mixture of creator and creature. The Cappadocians took a stand with Athanasius for such a doctrine against the Arians and Macedonians. They argued for the consubstantiality of the Holy Spirit, all writing a treatise on De Spiritu Sancto. The Classical definitive formula, as generally acknowledged, is found in Basil's work; "the other Cappadocians repeat and extend Basil's teaching,"[2] the homoousion of the Spirit. Their entire dogma of the Holy Spirit's deity, thus belonging to the Godhead as an hypostasis, is based upon; viz, the Spirit proceeds from the Father, as the Son is begotten and generated by the Father, and that which is 'begotten' and 'proceeds' of necessity is of the same, essential, essence, ousia, of that which begets and from which it proceeds, therefore consubstantial and coeternal.

> This is what we mean when we say Father and Son and Holy Ghost. The Father is the begetter and the emitter; . . . The Son is begotten, and the Holy Ghost is the emission . . . When did the Father come into being? There never was

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[1]Ibid. [2]Kelly, op. cit., 261.

> a time when he was not. And the same thing is true of the Son and the Holy Ghost.[1]

A problem which the Cappadocians had to face was the Arian nettling that the homoousian of the Spirit involved the Father having two Sons. So they had to differentiate between the mode of origin of the Son and that of the Spirit. "All that Basil can say on the subject is that the Spirit issues from God, not by way of generation, but as the breath of his mouth; and his manner of coming to be remains ineffable."[2]

> . . . He is moreover said to be "of God;" not indeed in the sense in which "all things are of God," but in the sense of proceeding out of God, not by generation, like the Son, but as Breath of His mouth. But in no way is the "mouth" a member, nor the Spirit breath that is dissolved; but the word "mouth" is used so far as it can be appropriate to God, and the Spirit is a Substance having life, gifted with supreme power of sanctification. Thus the close relation is made plain, while the mode of the ineffable existence is safeguarded.[3]

Thus they argued for the oneness of ousia but distinction of hypostases. Perhaps Gregory of Nazianzus reasons on "how" a little better. Speaking of the Son and Spirit simultaneously:

> How then are they not alike unoriginate, if they are co-eternal? Because they are from him, though not after him. For that which is unoriginate is eternal, but that which is eternal is not necessarily unoriginate so long as it may be referred to the Father as its origin. Therefore in respect of cause they are not unoriginate, but it is evident that the cause is not necessarily prior to its effects for the sun is not prior to its light.[4]

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[1]Gregory of Nazianzus, "Third Theological Oration," Library of Christian Classics, op. cit., 160.

[2]Kelly, op. cit., 262. [3]Basil, op. cit., 46, 29.

[4]Gregory of Nazianzus, op. cit., 162.

> Now these are the names of the Godhead, but the proper name of the unoriginate is "Father," and that of the unoriginately begotten is "Son," and that of the unbegottenly proceeding or going forth is the "Holy Ghost."[1]

> If one was from the beginning, the three were so too. If you throw down one . . . you do not set up the other two.[2]

So with the Spirit, as with the Son, the Cappadocians retained ousia for the common essence, one nature, and used hypostasis to express the difference, differentia. Their definition of the proper hypostasis of the Spirit "is a vertiable circle."[3]

> If it be asked what is the differentia of the Spirit, the answer is 'Procession.' If it be further asked what is Procession, the answer is 'difference.' 'Its most peculiar characteristic is that it is neither of those things which we contemplate in the Father and in the Son respectively.' 'What then is Procession? Do you tell me what is the Unbegotteness of the Father, and I will explain to you the physiology of the generation of the Son and the Procession of the Spirit . . . The real reason why Procession was made the differentia of the Spirit was that the word was found in Scripture.[4]

Thus, as far as we are able to discern in our theologians' writings, they taught the one ousia, in and of the Spirit, thus identical to the Son and Father but a distinct manifestation, hypostasis, from Father and Son, and not two Sons from, nor of the Father. However, another jibe in an attempt to destroy the necessary 'perfectness' of each hypostases,

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[1]Gregory of Nazianzus, "Fourth Theological Oration," op. cit., 190.

[2]Gregory of Nazianzus, "Fifth Theological Oration - On the Spirit," op. cit., 195.

[3]Rees, op. cit., 154.

[4]Ibid.; Mr. Rees is quoting Gregory of Nyssa and Gregory of Nazianzus, respectively, Adversus Eunomius i.22 and Oration XXXI, 8.

and if accomplished would destroy the trinity, was: "says my opponent, that there springs from the same source one who is Son and one who is not a Son . . . what . . . is there lacking to the Spirit which prevents his being Son for if there were not something lacking he would be a Son.[1]

> Is the Spirit God? Most certainly. Well then is he consubstantial? Yes, If he is God . . . We assert there is nothing lacking - for God has no deficiency. But the difference of manifestation . . . or rather . . . their mutual relations one to another has caused the difference in their names. For indeed it is not some deficiency in the Son which prevents his being Father (for Sonship is not deficiency) and yet he is not Father . . . this is not due to deficiency or subjection of essence; but the very fact of being unbegotten or begotten, or proceeding has given the name of Father to the first, Son to the second, and to the third, him of whom we are speaking, the Holy Ghost, that the distinction of the three persons may be preserved in one nature and dignity of Godhead.[2]

It was Gregory of Nyssa, however, who provided what was to prove the actual definitive statement. He teaches that the Spirit

> . . . is out of God and is of Christ; He proceeds out of the Father and receives from the Son . . . the Father being the cause . . . two caused . . . one of them is directly produced by the Father through an intermediary . . . the Father is in no way prejudiced by the fact that He /Spirit/ derives His being from Him /God/ through the Son . . . It is clearly Gregory's teaching that the Son acts as an agent, no doubt in subordination[3] to the Father who is the fountain head of the Trinity, in the production of the Spirit.[4]

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[1]Gregory of Nazianzus, op. cit., 199. [2]Ibid.

[3]As stated by the Cappadocians real subordination is lacking for the settling of their entire dogma is in the homoousion of the Spirit and Son with the Father.

[4]Kelly, op. cit., 262, 263.

The Cappadocians gave the third member of the trinity, the Holy Spirit, the definite place and character which he now possesses in Eastern orthodoxy as being a hypostasis in the Godhead consubstantial with the Father and proceeding from the Father through the Son.

> From the days of Tertullian the typical formula had been 'From the Father through the Son.' 'Proceeding from the Father is the most primitive filioque clause,' Eastern orthodoxy; however, in the fourth century the implication came 'the Son conjointly with the Father was actually productive of the Holy Spirit. The East has remained fiercely and fanatically to this form.[1]

No doubt, as with 'unoriginate' and 'unbegotten,' or 'only-begotten' and 'generation,' there has been an over emphasis and exaggerated concern for 'proceeding' and the 'prepositional relation' between the persons of the trinity.

> But the Cappadocians were all profoundly convinced that the time was ripe to vindicate, with whatever necessary reserve of language the position of the Spirit in the unity of the divine essence. They were less conscious than Athanasius of the religious significance of the Homo-ousios, and more moved by the metaphysical motive to construct an intellectual scheme of deity that would correspond to the baptismal formula and the Rule of Faith.[2]

The Council of Constantinople (381) established, "Which proceedeth from the Father," and did so upon the passages, II Corinthians 3:17,

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[1]J. N. D. Kelly, Early Christian Creeds (2nd. ed. London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1952), 358.

The Western theology was: "Which proceedeth from the Father and the Son," which with the eastern statement furnished the battle ground nearly seven centuries later resulting in the separation of eastern from western Christendom.

[2]Rees, op. cit., 158.

John 6:63 and John 15:26. They stand authoritative to this very day, as the Council of Chalcedon (451) fixed the two natures in the Son, for orthodoxy.

> The result has been abstract doctrines, constructed rather mechanically by putting together some passages of Scripture either in a too-literal fashion or in a too-scientific and theoretical manner. The doctrine of the Holy Spirit has suffered from such an approach, especially since it was included in the early creedal formulations more for formal reasons than for experimental ones. So we find this kind of treatment extending from Basil of Caesarea with his exaggerated concern the prepositional relation among the persons of the Trinity, to H. B. Swete (The Holy Spirit in the New Testament) with his detailed exegesis of innumerable passages but with no resulting unified view.[1]

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[1]Come, op. cit., 119.

CHAPTER V

THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY

Not the trinity but first the deity of Christ and the Holy Spirit secondly were concerns in definitive theology of the early Church. "The basic attacks on Christian dogma are implicitly or explicitly on the Christological level."[1] The Nicean formula is generally considered the basic trinitarian statement of the church. But that is misleading because "the decision of Nicea is a christological one."[2] It may be affirmed, however, that the statement of Nicea provided the first basic contribution toward developing definitive trinitarian dogma. The restatement and enlargement of the orthodox formula at Constantinople (381), although it added the deity of the Holy Spirit to the full deity of the Son, "was a christological statement."[3] Although the council of Constantinople was "the reaffirmation of the Nicene faith"[4] the consubstantiality of the Spirit was formally endorsed. With a definitive formula worked out on the Son and one on the Spirit, one for the trinity was inescapable. And the final discussion of trinitarian doctrine, of necessity, must have awaited the development of the idea of the Spirit. "Trinitarian symbols

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[1]Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology. Existence and the Christ (2nd. ed.; Chicago: The University of Chicago Press., 1958), II, 139.

[2]Ibid., 142. [3]Ibid. [4]Kelly, op. cit., 261.

become empty if they are separated from their two experiential roots . . . the living God and the experience of the New Being in the Christ."[1]

The theological statement at Constantinople was that of the Cappadocian Fathers; however, it "may be fairly described as in substance that of Athanasius."[2] That which was different was the angle of approach making the three hypostases their starting point and not the one divine ousia. Issuing from the homoousians' tradition, it is seemingly natural that they should make the three hypostases their starting point. This, in their thinking, inevitably led them to the one undivided ousia of the Godhead as Athanasius, and later Augustine in the West kept the unity of substance by beginning with it and allowing it to express itself as Father, Son and Spirit. Both approaches are classicism's channels to trinitarian dogma leading to orthodoxy, one being Eastern, the other Western. The Cappadocians' trinitarian formula is one ousia in three hypostases, but their approach, therefore, their apparent emphasis, was on the three hypostases which sounded painfully like three ousia, or three divine beings, i. e. three Gods; and they were merely trying to express the separate subsistence of the three persons in the consubstantial triad in order to stay clear of Sabellianism.

Avoiding the charge of Sabellianism by emphatically declaring three distinct hypostases they fell short, in the eyes of many, of upholding orthodox monotheism. Thus they were left open to the charge of being polytheistic and suffered the taint of Arianism. It is astonishing the extent to which theological divisions were kept alive and created by the

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[1]Tillich, op. cit., 145. [2]Kelly, op. cit., 263, 264.

use of different and mutual confusing theological terms. "By creating a firm terminology they [the Cappadocians] succeeded at the same time in producing apparently clear formulas."[1] This creation of firm terminology and the definitive formula was possible because of the conversion of the great body of homeousians to the homoousian position, first the Son and then of the Spirit. We shall try now to set forth the system of thought this firm terminology declared in a chronology formed from our own analysis of their trinitarian dogma.

The essence of their doctrine is that the supreme being is one divine ousia existing in a Godhead simultaneously in three modes of existence, Father, Son and Spirit, the three hypostases, and that one or all of the latter equals the one divine ousia, God.

> Everything that the Father is is seen in the Son, and everything that the Son is belongs to the Father. The Son in His entirety abides in the Father, and in return possesses the Father in entirety in Himself. Thus the hypostases of the Son is, so to speak, the form and presentation by which the Father is known, and the Father's hypostases is recognized in the form of the Son.[2]

Here we have the doctrine of the co-inherence of the divine persons, or as "it was later called 'perichoresis.'"[3] In other words, the one ousia can be said to exist undivided in divided persons, "one in diversity, diverse in unity, wherein is a marvel"[4] Gregory of Nyssa said it this way:

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[1]Harnack, op. cit., 260.

[2]Basil, "Epistle XXXVIII," op. cit., 141. [3]Kelly, loc. cit.

[4]Gregory of Nazianzus, "On God," Library of Christian Classics, op. cit., 136.

> When we see them together we can count them. Yet the nature is one, united in itself, a unit completely indivisible, which is neither increased by addition nor dimished by subtraction, being and remaining essentially one, inseparable even when appearing in plurality, continuous and entire and not divided by the individuals who share it.[1]

Next, one must comprehend their meaning in the use of the word "Godhead." This undivided ousia, which is the nature of deity, is in three persons, which is the Godhead, which does not refer ever to God's nature in unity nor diversity.

> Most people think that the word "Godhead" refers to God's nature in a special way . . . His nature cannot be named and is ineffable . . . the divine nature . . . is not signified by any of these terms. Rather is same attribute declared by what is said.[2]

To our theologians if 'Godhead' referred to the divine nature that would force them to speak of 'gods' and forbid 'God.'[3] "We have fairly well proved . . . that the word 'Godhead' does not refer to a nature but to an operation."[4] If the three hypostases, Father, Son and Spirit, the Godhead, referred to the divine ousia, then there would of necessity be three gods. But if the divine ousia is thought of as expressing itself in the attributes, or operations, of Father, Son and Spirit, one God is firmly established. "From this it is clear that the divine nature is not signified by any of these terms. Rather is some attribute declared by what is said."[5] Herein is their meaning given to Godhead, viz. the three hypostases.

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[1]Gregory of Nyssa, "On Not Three Gods," op. cit., 258. [2]Ibid., 259.

[3]Ibid., 260. [4]Ibid., 261. [5]Ibid., 259. Viz. the three hypostases.

To explain how the one substance can be simultaneously present in three persons, manifestations, divided yet undivided, they appeal to the analogy of a universal and its particulars. "In each of these terms we find a particular idea which by thought and expression we rightfully attribute to the divine nature, but which does not express what that nature essentially is."[1] "I shall state that ousia has the same relation to hypostases as the common has to the particular."[2] Gregory of Nyssa illustrates in the following manner:

> There are many who have shared in the same nature--disciples, apostles, martyrs . . . but the "man" in them all is one . . . Luke is a man, as is Stephen. But that does not mean that if anyone is a man he is therefore Luke or Stephen . . . Yet the nature is one . . . appearing in plurality . . . . .[3]

> We say of gold, when it is made into small coins that it is one and that it is spoken of as such . . . While we speak of many coins . . . we find no multiplication of nature of gold by reason of the number of starters.[4]

"In the same manner, in the matter in question, the term ousia is common, . . . while hypostases is contemplated in the special property of Fatherhood, Sonship or power to sanctify."[5] So, according to Basil the particularizing characteristics of the universal are "paternity," "sonship," and "sanctifying power." Also, the particulars are defined as 'ingenerateness,' 'generateness,' and 'procession,' 'unbegotten,' 'begotten' and 'emission' according to the theological jargon of the other Cappadocians.

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[1]Ibid. [2]Basil, "Epistle CCXIV," op. cit., 254.

[3]Gregory of Nyssa, loc. cit. [4]Ibid., 265. [5]Basil, loc. cit.

> Hitherto the words ousia and hypostases had commonly been used as synonymns . . . the Cappadocians distinguished them sharply.[1] Basil particularly tends to contrast hypostases and ousia.[2] Ousia was treated, however, rarely equal to hypostases. Basil found it possible to speak of the trinity as three ousia, but on internal characteristics or relations rather than on metaphysical.[3]
>
> What the Cappadocians really meant and finally clearly said was that the three hypostases shared an identity of essence. There were not three gods with common divinity, but one God with three modes of his being.[4]

In this manner the Cappadocians, in order to make clear wherein the oneness and wherein the trinity lies, crystallized the theology of the term homoousion.

> The term homoousion was adopted to extripate . . . impiety: The conjunction of the Son with the Father is without time and without internal . . . The Holy Spirit, too, is numbered with the Father and Son . . . This term corrects the error of Sabellius for it removes the idea of the identity of the hypostases, and introduces in perfection the idea of Persons . . . The word has therefore an excellent and orthodox use, defining as it does both the proper character of the hypostases and setting forth the invaribility of the nature.[5]

The oneness, as well as the foundation, of orthodox trinitarianism lies in homoousious, identity of substance; the trinity springs, emerges from this; the trinity lies in the three hypostases; without either, one ousia, or three, not more nor less, hypostases their is no trinity; and without the trinity, the three-in-one, there is no knowledge of nor understanding of God and man. But how can there be distinct, diverse modes if there is one identity of being?

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[1]McGiffert, op. cit., 268. [2]Richardson, op. cit., 65.

[3]J. N. D. Kelly, Early Christian Creeds, op. cit., 242.

[4]Richardson, loc. cit. [5]Basil, "Epistle CII," op. cit., 155, 156.

> And when we are taught that the Son is of the substance of the Father, begotten, not made, let us not fall into the material sense of the relations. For the substance was not separated from the Father and bestowed upon the Son, neither did the substance engender by fluxion, nor yet by shooting forth as plants their fruits. The mode of the divine begetting is ineffable and inconceivable by human thought.[1]

In other words, the "how?" cannot be articulated. It is just a plain fact of the Holy Scriptures and human experience that God has expressed himself as Father, who begot the Son, and sent forth the Holy Spirit through the Son. "We must not . . . contaminate our intelligence with corporeal senses."[2]

> It is merely the statement of a necessary paradox that the one God exists as both beyond and related inaccessible and encountered . . . the difficulty . . . arises . . . from trying to derive one mode from the other.[3]

And, of course, the Cappadocians ran squarely into this difficulty. For upon stating that the Son was derived from the Father and the Holy Spirit from him also inevitably came the concept of a second ousia and then the third ousia. But they would have nothing to do with this reasoning stating dogmatically that three distinct subsistances of the one ousia did not make another substance any more than Peter, James and John make another, though three, than 'man.' "Those who accept three hypostases think themselves compelled to confess an equal number of substances. I have therefore, that you may not fall into a similar error, written you,"[4] Basil wrote to his brother.

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[1]Ibid., 156. [2]Ibid. [3]Richardson, loc. cit.

[4]Basil, "Epistle XXXVIII," op. cit., 137.

To meet the second problem stemming from 'derived' that Son and Spirit, even if of the same substance, had to be less than the Father Basil said, "Peter is no more /nor less/ man than Andrew or John or James."[1] "By maintaining any of the three persons to be inferior to the other, we overturn the whole trinity."[2] "Everything that the Father is is seen in the Son and everything that Son is belongs to the Father . . . . ."[3] But this doctrine of co-inherence precludes in any degree the three divine persons, distinct and individual. So where do we go from here?

> Hence, as the word embraces all that are included under the same name, there is need of some mark of distinction by which we may recognize not man in general but Peter or John. There are other nouns which stand for a particular object and denote not the other nature but a separate thing having nothing in common, so far as individuality goes, with others of the same kind, like Paul or Timothy.[4]

The Cappadocians would have nothing to do with God being three persons (prosoopon) and these persons being merely "faces," "masks," or "roles," as Sabellius believed. "If then you transfer to theology the distinction you have in human affairs between substance and hypostases you will not go wrong."[5]

But how could our theologians insist on this co-inherence, absolute equality, one essence, "Everything that the Father is is seen

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[1]Ibid.

[2]Gregory of Nazianzus, "On the Holy Spirit," op. cit., 318 ff.

[3]Basil, op. cit., 141. [4]Ibid.

[5]Ibid. Of course, this advice was adverse to "We must not contaminate our intelligence with corporeal senses," as we saw earlier when discouraging attempts to articulate and comprehend 'begetting.'

in the Son," etc., and at the same time not swerve from the dogmatics of "a separate thing having nothing in common so far as individuality goes with others of the same kind," for they even insisted that the same, and all, activity and operations were common to the three. A unity of substance of necessity resulted in a unity, oneness, of will, thought, operation or activity, too. Their theory is that the unity of the ousia, or Godhead, follows from the unity of divine action disclosed in revelation.

> For, 'if we observe,' writes Gregory of Nyssa, a single activity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in no respect different in the case of any, we are obliged to infer unity of nature . . . from the identity of activity."[1]

Those whose operations are identical have a single substance. We saw the explanation of the single substance of the three persons of the trinity, and absolute equality, is the illustration of Peter, James and John and common substance, "man." The Cappadocians' articulation of the oneness of activity, or operation, is based upon Scriptures such as: "Let us make man in our image;"[2] "Whatsoever the Father does, the Son does likewise."[3]

> We do not learn that the Father does something on his own, in which the Son does not co-operate. Or again that the Son acts on his own without the Spirit.[4]

We must avoid thinking that this takes any absolute supremacy away from the Father. "Rather does every operation which extends from

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[1]Kelly, Early Christian Doctrines, op. cit., 266.

[2]Genesis 1:26. This was used to confirm oneness of ousia, too.

[3]John 5:19. [4]Gregory of Nyssa, op. cit., 262.

God to creation and is designated according to our differing conceptions of it have its origin in the Father."[1] It is our conclusion that the oneness of operation is expressed in "co-operation" for every idea, thought, extended to creation always comes from the Father and without variance must and does "proceed through the Son, and reaches its completion by the Holy Spirit."[2]

> It is for this reason that the word of the operation is not divided among the persons involved. For the action of each in any matter is not separate and individualized. But what occurs, whether in reference to God's providence for us or to the government and constitution of the universe, occurs through the three Persons, and is not three separate things . . . But though we take for granted that there are three Persons and names, we do not imagine that three different lives are granted us--one from each of them. Rather it is the same life which is produced by the Father, prepared by the Son, and depends on the will of the Holy Spirit. Thus the holy Trinity brings to effect every operation in a similar way.[3]

There is no activity brought to completion, be it "seeing," "judging," "saving," individually, separately nor "apart from joint supervision."[4] Thus, as the three hypostases cannot be viewed numerically because of "identity of essence," the action of the Father, that of the Son and that of the Spirit cannot be viewed as three actions because of joint and simultaneously operation of the three persons in every action begun and completed. Here and herein only comes clear the meaning of the Cappadocians' phrase, "Everything that the Father is is seen in the Son," etc. But primarily, it is in this oneness of being, (though the unbegottenness, begottenness, and proceeding being forever

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[1]Ibid. [2]Ibid. [3]Ibid. [4]Ibid., 263.

inarticulate) that the absoluteness of the three Persons accomplishing everything jointly rests. In this manner we see the Father on the cross, the Son as Creator, and the Holy Spirit also there and doing.

> But God who is over all is the Savior of all, while the Son brings salvation to effect by the grace of the Spirit. Yet on this account Scripture does not call them three Saviors, although salvation is recognized to come from the holy Trinity . . . God is one, because no distinction of nature or of operation is to be observed in the Godhead . . . it admits of no plural significance.[1]

We have learned:[2] it is the Father only who is "unbegotten." It is the Son only who is "begotten." It is the Spirit only who "proceeds." Though their nature is identical and all functioning is in oneness, these distinctions cannot be taken from each, nor given to the other. It was only the "only begotten" on the cross, though we see an identical substance to the Father and Spirit there and all three willing and carrying out the action. It was only the 'proceeding one' decending upon the church at Pentecost, though he is of identical substance with Father and Son and could not have been without the other two nor could he have been decending without the co-operation of them. It was the Father only who was "unbegotten" but he neither created nor saved the world nor established the Church separately from the Son or Spirit, who were "of" the ousia of the Father God. So, because of the one ousia and oneness of operation we cannot say there are three Gods, rather one ousia in three hypostases, which is revealed to man by the three hypostases in one ousia. "If we use number we must use it reverently."[3] He was

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[1] Ibid., 264, 266. [2] Ibid., 256, 267.

[3] Basil, "On the Holy Spirit," op. cit., 44.

pointing out that while each of the persons is designated one, they cannot be added together. The Cappadocians, thought:

> The reason for this is that the divine nature which They share is simple and indivisible. As Gregory of Nazianzus remarks it is 'absolutely simple and indivisible substance' 'indivisible and uniform without parts . . .' In other words they have transferred their emphasis from mere numerical unity to unity of nature. Evagrius says . . . In answer to those who upbraid us with tritheism, let it be said that we worship one God, one not in number but in nature." Whatever is described as one in a mere numerical sense is not one really, and is not simple in nature; but everyone recognizes that God is simple and incomposite. But the corollary of this simplicity is that tritheism is unthinkable.[1]

The Cappadocians established the orthodox doctrine of the trinity in Eastern dogma and were the foundation upon which Western dogma was erected by the theologian Augustine.

> One Divine essence in three Subjects, the equal nature of which contained in their consubstantiality is distinctly stamped in their qualities and activities, their differences in the characteristics of their mode of being.[2]

Or, as another theologian has very well summarized their doctrine:

> The whole unvaried substance, being incomposite, is identical with the whole unvaried being of each Person . . . the individuality is only the manner in which the identical substance is objectively presented in each several Persons.[3]

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[1]Kelly, op. cit., 268, 269. [2]Harnack, op. cit., 269.

[3]G. L. Prestige, God in Patristic Thought, (2nd. ed. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1952), 244.

CONCLUSION

We have been watching the subtle speculative element of Christianity in the fourth century. The doctrine of the trinity resulted from religious and speculative inquiry into the relation between the three aspects of the divine nature, Father, Son and Spirit. We have seen this subtle speculative element rapidly grow and reach the summit in the efforts of the later Fathers of the Church "using, philosophy as the handmaid of theology."[1]

This problem of theology, trinity, seems to be designed to be one rising inevitably to gigantic proportions. When one looks back over all the personal ambitions, political clashes, jealousies, philosophical-theological maneuverings one wonders at the similarity of thought which has emerged. Then again, "it is hard to doubt that some hand of Divine Guidance was as a golden thread running throughout."[2] The truth of Mr. Van Dusen's assertion is more apparent upon comprehending the fullness with which heretics and Fathers alike appealed to the New Testament for their support. "They could do so for this reason, that New Testament reflection on the nature of God was in a fluid state, akin to their own experimental thinking."[3] Trinitarian dogmas, orthodox or unorthodox,

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[1]Canon R. D. Richardson, Harvard Theological Review, The Doctrine of the Trinity, XXXVI (April, 1943), 126.

[2]Van Dusen, op. cit., 149. [3]C. R. D. Richardson, op. cit., 110.

are not to be found explicit nor implicit within the pages of the New Testament.

> These Biblical materials, of course, are not yet a doctrine. Even Barth clearly insists that "the doctrine of the Trinity is a work of the church," in which the church makes "an analysis" of revelation as attested by Scripture.[1]

The development of trinitarian thought and the resulting dogmas can be said to have been imported. However, "the problem was not invented, but was set by the Christian experience,"[2] we wish to keep in the foreground of our minds always. This imported doctrine has not been without its benefits. It has saved Christianity from a return to paganism. It has given, since the days of his flesh, timely assurances that God was in and responsible for Jesus Christ of history; therefore, constantly setting forth the truth that salvation does not hinge upon man alone. These doctrinal formulations have repeatedly helped in deepening and perserving the individual's and the church's experience of the threefold experience set forth in biblical revelation. The latter has been accomplished especially "when the doctrine has been used as an aid to faith and not as the object of faith or legalistic test of orthodoxy,"[3] and when verbally asserted adherence to church-sanctioned orthodoxy was not made the requisite for recognizable Christian sincerity.

But since definitive formulations have been repeatedly made the tests of orthodoxy and sincerity of Christian living, deepening and perserving the Christian individual and Church has not been accomplished,

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[1]Come, op. cit., 141. [2]C. R. D. Richardson, op. cit., 112.

[3]Come, op. cit., 142.

perhaps, not in predominance. A careful weighing of the total historical account makes one question very little the evaluation of a brand new contemporary author: "When God became the property of specialized theologians, generalized peddlers took Him over and redesigned Him for mass consumption."[1] History is full of the origin and growth of cults during the times of heated theological controversy and definitive formulations, and this is true especially when the individual was required to embrace the latter or suffer anathematization.

The anathemas of the early church, and today, have tended to stop or hinder intellectual inquiry. The doctrine of the trinity itself was framed by the intellect. We say, "let the intellectual passion for inquiry survive and revive," that is: question forever conclusions in theology and practical Christian living as it is done in the field of science and perennially attempts to restate old truths in new and better ways without fear of dogmaticians.

> Might not the long period of intellectual squalor which we call the Dark Ages perchance have been avoided, and the intellectual passion of inquiry which brought it to an end not been cast out with the Nestorian heretics? It was in obedience to insistence on correct thinking about these mysteries, rather than on the primary importance of discipleship, that they were expelled from the Roman Empire.[2]

All of the questions arise again in modern theology and scholars, teachers, students, believers are branded liberal, conservative, evangelical, fundamental or heretical. As one looks at the ecumenical

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[1]Martin E. Marty, The New Shape of American Religion (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959), 37.

[2]C. R. D. Richardson, op. cit., 114.

movement and adversity toward or indifference to it, one sees the same bigotry, bitterness and division of the fourth century and succeeding one. But future historians may see the hand of God at work in the World Council, the Evangelical Councils, and the rivals of each as one beholds that 'golden thread' in centuries past.

This is a new day of intellectual inquiry and will go down in history as such if those presently involved can cause it to rise above and conquer temptations to be swallowed up in materialism, generalizations, and the indifference of the day, and at the same time ward off the temptation to crystalize Christian doctrine in order to survive.

Claude Welch has made an exhaustive analysis[1] and summary of recent trends in trinitarian theology. Arnold Come has filtered it out in an excellent summary.

> Recent trends . . . claims to discern eight distinct positions: (1) rejection as a foreign speculation (J. Baillie, A. C. McGiffert, D. C. Macintosh, W. Pauck; (2) a dramatic symbol (A. C. Knudson; (3) monarchian (primarily a mode of revelation) (H. F. Ball, G. Harkness, W. N. Harton, G. Aulen); (4) a defensive doctrine, centering in kerygma of Jesus as Savior (Brunner); (5) useful as a philosophical principle (L. Thornton, D. Sayers); (6) unreflective traditional dogmatism (fundamentalists); (7) the synthesis and completion of the doctrinal system (H. Pittinger, J. Thale, N. Micklem, L. Hodgson; and (8) the immediate implication and so identical with the content of revelation (Barth).[2]

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[1]Claude Welch, The Doctrine of the Trinity in Contemporary Theology (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons 1952), chaps. 2-6, p. 125 ff.

[2]Come, op. cit., 141. "Without doubt, the most creative attempt, since Augustine, to state the doctrine of the Trinity from Biblical viewpoint has been made by Karl Barth," ibid., 143.

However, as Mr. Come pointed out[1] the diversity is not quite as great as it seems. Four of the eight positions (Nos. 3, 4, 7, 8) he basically identifies and makes them one, which he makes similar to the basic supposition of Athanasius of the fourth century, with whom he aligns Karl Barth. The other positions he identifies and makes them synonymous to the Cappadocians, who have as their modern counterpart, Leonard Hodgson. Though basically the same, the approach to trinity is different and the resulting effect is two definitive formulas. As these two alternatives come to light in classic trinitarianism "they have created an unresolved tension in the mind of the church up to the present day."[2]

Athanasius set forth the primary vision of a one-natured three-fold God; the Cappadocians, a like-natured (not homoeousion, but homoousion) triune God. For Athanasius the mystery lies in trinity and knows the one God; for the Cappadocians the three persons of God we know, and the mystery lies in God's unity. To Athanasius, God is personal in his unity, therefore, there is a blur among the distinctions of the three persons; for the Cappadocians, the three <u>hypostases</u> are personal while their unity is abstract, an impersonal substance. However, in relation to this last comparison, we have decided with Bethune-Baker who flatly asserts[3] that in classical usage 'person' (prosōpon or persona) "never means what 'person' means in modern popular usage . . . It always

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[1]<u>Ibid.</u> [2]Come, <u>op. cit.</u>, 142. [3]Bethune-Baker, <u>op. cit.</u>, 234-235.

designates status, or character, or part, or function; attention is fixed on the character or function rather than on the subject."[1] Hence,

> The concept of a "social Trinity" /Hodgson/ (a perfect community of three "Persons") appears to be a predominantly speculative formulation, based on the modern concept of personality read back into the classic doctrine. Certainly the Biblical references to Father, Son and Holy Spirit . . . makes the concept of God as a committee of three completely untenable.[2]

To continue on with the persistent difference of emphasis in classic formulation as pointed out in Athanasius and the Cappadocians, for those who insist and agree that trinity is integral to the Christian faith, in act and in revelation, "this basic problem of difference has not been resolved . . . although fifteen hundred years of theology have developed new terminologies of Christian faith."[3]

> We say three persons, not that we wish to say it, but that we may not be reduced to silence.[4]

> Either the unity is swallowed up in diversity, or the diversity is overcome by the unity. The long struggle to find a fitting way to bring together these two symbols, both necessary as they are has issued in nothing but futility.[5]

Mr. Van Dusen asserts[6] that there are "in contemporary theology . . . three reinterpretations of the Trinity of more than usual

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[1]Ibid., 234. [2]Come, op. cit., 144. [3]Ibid., 142.

[4]St. Augustine, The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series, ed. by Philip Schaff, 5 vols. (Buffalo: The Christian Literature Co., 1887), III, "On the Trinity," 7:6.

[5]Cyril Richardson, op. cit., 91. [6]Van Dusen, op. cit., 164-169.

originality and power."[1] Like Mr. Come, one he identifies with Karl Barth and relates it to Augustine and back to Athanasius; the other he asserts is the direct contradition and--aligns on that side Leonard Hodgson, anglicanism and the Cappadocians. Strangely, he makes the third reinterpretation that of Dorothy Sayers calling it "the most original and suggestive . . . of the Trinity in these latter years."[2] To us it is synonymous and just equal to Come, Barth, Augustine, and Athanasius and today's Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick. Mr. Van Dusen cites[3] the latter person and his portrayal of Theodore Roosevelt by himself in his Autobiography as an approach to trinity today. Mr. Fosdick presents Mr. Roosevelt, the public figure, the sportsman, and the boyish, mischievous playmate.

> Which was Theodore Roosevelt? One might have . . . known well one of these "persons" and never suspected that there was another, two others. The three avenues . . . lead to three different Theodore Roosevelts; no, not "three persons," but one person in three separate modes of operation [and existences].[4]

And with this alternative Mr. Van Dusen takes his stand, for he says: "Our analogies should be drawn, not from a multiplicity of persons, not . . . of faculties or functions within each person, but from the familiar reality . . . of a whole person in his manifold experience and expression."[5]

Apparently every stage of trinitarian formulation from the third century on to the present day speculation regarding the Godhead has moved

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[1] Ibid., 164. [2] Ibid., 166. [3] Ibid., 173-175.

[4] Ibid., 173. [5] Ibid., 175.

along these two alternatives we've set forth. To us the mystery is not how all these divine beings can be one, but how the one God can manifest himself in so many ways and still be the total self. And the incarnation is the focal point of the mystery. But it appears to us that we just shall have to take the incarnation "God in the flesh" seriously, viz. like we have seriously taken Mr. Eisenhower, the boy of Kansas, the soldier, and the president seriously. We shall have to align ourselves, at this point, with Mr. Come's presentation[1] in outline, which seems the most sensible and understandable approach to understanding trinity to date. The essential characteristics we shall summarize briefly:

> (1) Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are 'three modes of existence.' They are not three rather distinct parts of God, who, in his oneness, hovers unseen behind or above his separate manifestations. The one God is fully present and active in any and all of his modes of being and action.
>
> (2) The threefoldness of Father, Son, and Spirit is threefoldness in the structure or pattern of the one act of God in Christ and the Holy Spirit and therefore the structure of all divine activity and the Being of God. Father, Son, and Spirit point merely to the complexity of relations that the one God maintains between himself and man, thus within himself to himself.
>
> (3) The trinitarian formula can be applied in three ways: (a) to the modes of God's approach to us; (b) to the modes of God's being-in-relationship to us; and (c) to the modes of the being of the one who relates himself to us. The emphasis falls upon the second but the other two are legitimate and called for under certain circumstances.
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> (4) God is the absolute 'other one' to us. He is the one who confronts us with himself. God is the one who unites himself to us and us to himself. It is the same one in all three relationships and he is related to us in all three ways simultaneously.

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[1]Come, op. cit., 144-153.

> (5) God is a person to us in the modern sense of the word in the totality of the total relationships, Father, Son, and Spirit. If only one level of relationship were maintained, God would disappear.
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> (6) So we cry out "our Heavenly Father as the one from whom we have come; "O Christ, our Savior," as the same one; "Come Holy Spirit," as the same one to come and commune with us.[1]

We do not agree with Mr. Cyril Richardson when he says, "the terms Father and Son are unfitting to express God in his beyondness over against God in his relations with the world."[2] We do agree with him in answer to the question, "Why do we sometimes say the Father does this and the Son does that and the Holy Spirit this?"

> Such statements as the Scriptures make them must not be taken at their face value. They are symbolic, not literal . . . They are not only important to make but also necessary to make in order to draw our attention to the fact that there is a Trinity. Without them we should be in danger of neglecting the doctrine of the Trinity altogether.[3]

Though Mr. Richardson is not as clear as Mr. Come, and often ambiguous and inconsistent, we think, he is essentially on our side of understanding, for he says: "In literal truth it is the whole Trinity doing something . . . we say the Father . . . though it really belongs equally and indivisibly to the whole Trinity."[4] And he quotes Augustine for support who remarked that when we say "'Our Father,' our address is not to the Father alone, but to the whole Trinity."[5]

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[1]This is not Sabellianism, championed once again in Frederick Schleirmacker.

[2]Richardson, op. cit., 69. [3]Ibid., 75.

[4]Ibid., 76. [5]Ibid., Augustine, De Trinitate, 5.11.12.

In the light of the foregoing attempts to set forth trinity understandably, we would not agree with Mr. H. Wheeler Robinson's remark that "the fourth century doctrine in its historical interpretation is much more intelligible than some modern attempts to defend it."[1] We would agree heartily with other assertions by previously cited authors[2] and consider them a most adequate and fitting summary to our study:

The classical doctrine of the trinity fails to satisfy the Christian men of today not because it says too much, it does verbally, but because it says too little. We have richer categories and an ampler experience of the work of the Holy Spirit. Ousia and hypostases are inadequate to our larger concept of 'spirithood.' That is why the typical modern attempts to defend the classical doctrine fail to bring conviction or to inspire enthusiasm. Its underlying philosophy is superceded; our experience cannot be run into the mould of these conceptions without serious loss. No Christian doctrine will be satisfactory which does not conserve the religious values as faithfully as did the fourth century. The classical doctrine has great 'symbolic' worth, and is rightly felt to safeguard religious values that are vital to Christian experience. We are only at the beginning of the formulation of such a doctrine that's clear and needed, but it seems possible to indicate the path of approach to it. We have seen of the ancient doctrine there was no period in which the work and personality of the Holy Spirit formed the central subject of debate.

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[1]Robinson, op. cit., 255.

[2]See Arnold Come, Human Spirit and Holy Spirit, op. cit., 1959. Also, Henry P. Van Dusen, Spirit, Son and Father, op. cit., 1959.

Perhaps we agree with Mr. Cyril Richardson that the trinitarian symbols, Father, Son and Spirit have not and do not adequately set forth trinity and that we ought to search for new and better words to express our faith and experience of God. But we cannot go along with: "It is doubtful that there is any real value in thinking of these . . . the terms do not illuminate it. Rather they becloud it . . . they introduce much ambiguity."[1] We ought not be derrogatory, or negative, in the use of these trinitarian symbols, at least until the arrival of proven new and better ones have come into being. Again, it is perhaps unlikely that these hoped for new discoveries will not come. The Incarnate God used the terms, seemingly as adequate. He spoke "Father," "Son," and "Spirit" to teach and give understanding of deity. He seemed to be in the Spirit, spoke by the Spirit, taught by the Spirit. Perhaps this, and this word, is our approach for today to new and better understanding of the trinity in Christian experience. The Spirit is God, and even Christ, in the world and us today.

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[1]Richardson, op. cit., 25, 26.

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